UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
12th meeting
held on
Friday, 11 October 1991
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 12th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. BURKE (Ireland)

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AGENDA ITEM 90: INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AND THE DIVERSIFICATION AND MODERNIZATION OF PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITIES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 90: INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AND THE DIVERSIFICATION AND MODERNIZATION OF PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITIES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (A/46/445-E/1991/141)

1. Mr. HALLOWAY (United Nations Industrial Development Organization), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on Industrial development cooperation and the diversification and modernization of productive activities in developing countries (A/46/455), drawn up pursuant to the request made by the General Assembly in resolution 45/196, said that despite the formidable time constraints the Secretariat had endeavoured to submit a concise report containing recommendations based largely on the UNIDO medium-term plan, 1990-1995 (GC.3/17). The views of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, the UNIDO Industrial Development Board and the Economic and Social Council had been taken into consideration in the final version, as had the comments made by Member States and specialized agencies and the results of the debate on the cross-organizational programme analysis.

2. Regarding the medium-term evolution of the industrial sector, UNIDO suggested a major study of the long-term development of world industrial structure, addressing such issues as technological progress, international trade and resource flows, environmentally sustainable industrial development, employment generation and human resource development, and, finally, the role of government, markets and decentralized economic management. Additional resources would be required in order to carry out that study, a preliminary outline of which had been circulated.

3. UNIDO had refrained from making specific recommendations on access to environmentally sound technology pending the International Conference on Ecologically Sustainable Industrial Development, to be held in Copenhagen from 14 to 18 October 1991.

4. With regard to the transfer of technology, the report recommended that the General Assembly take note of resolution GC.3/Res.7 of the General Conference of UNIDO, which dealt with the question.

5. The report contained a number of recommendations on industrial programming, advocating in particular that developing countries should formulate their national industrial modernization programmes with a view to identifying new priority sectors and products where growth could be based on efficient production, and that bilateral and multilateral agencies should support industrial modernization programmes.

6. With regard to economic and technical cooperation among developing countries, the Assembly might wish to recall resolution GC.3/Res.9, which dealt with the issue. It was particularly important to encourage a better flow of information among industrial enterprises in developing countries.

(Mr. Halloway, UNIDO)

7. Because of time constraints, it had not been possible to deal in document A/46/455 with the question of the training of scientists, engineers and entrepreneurs in the developing countries. Working jointly with the United Nations Secretariat, UNIDO would shortly draw up a report, including a plan of action, to be submitted to the Assembly at its forty-seventh session.

8. The Secretary-General's report also contained recommendations on the development of small-scale enterprises in the private sector, the mobilization of financial resources for industrial development, especially through joint ventures, cooperation between UNIDO and international financing institutions, especially the World Bank, the development of special trust funds to support industrial enterprises and the industrialization of the least developed countries.

9. Mr. NAADJIE (Ghana), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, said that the developing countries, which had not had the opportunity of participating in the industrial revolution which had transformed society, were striving with the aid of the international community to utilize to the full the opportunities engendered by the increasing globalization of the world economy in order to move along the road to industrialization. However, rather than being an end in itself, industrialization should make it possible, through concerted international efforts to create employment, alleviate poverty and increase the population's general standard of living.

10. In order to achieve those aims, it was vital to step up international cooperation to ensure that the intensified global competition stimulated by recent events did not widen interregional and inter-country gaps in income, industrial capacity and technology. The developing countries did not wish to be left behind in those areas. The forthcoming decade would therefore require innovative approaches to international cooperation so that they would be able to broaden and strengthen their industrial base.

11. However, the efforts made by developing countries would come to nothing if the international environment was unfavourable, unstable and unpredictable. Even a small increase in international interest rates, a sudden fall in commodity prices or an increase in protectionism could at a stroke wipe out all their efforts at resource mobilization and, at the least, limit the impact of the financial assistance they received.

12. Industrialization in developing countries was closely linked with the modernization of productive activities. As highlighted in the Caracas Programme of Action adopted in 1981, an integrated approach to issues relating to human resource development, development and transfer of technology and energy resources was needed to promote a sound industrial base. The developing countries had emphasized that increased cooperation among themselves was necessary to facilitate their industrial development and diversification, a position endorsed by the South Commission report.

(Mr. Naadjie, Ghana)

13. It was equally essential for multilateral agencies to expand their activities and for financial institutions to increase their cooperation with UNIDO. The regional dimension of industrialization in developing countries should also be addressed and special efforts made to assist the least developed countries.

14. Lastly, it was the task of UNIDO to provide policy guidelines in a multilateral framework for the industrialization of developing countries, and it was to be hoped that it would find the bold and imaginative solutions necessary.

15. Mrs. van der HEIJDEN (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States, said that, since the issue of industrial cooperation and the diversification and modernization of productive activities in developing countries had been dealt with extensively during the last session of the Economic and Social Council, she would limit herself to reiterating some of the main points made by the European Community representative on that occasion.

16. The European Community welcomed the fact that the General Assembly had decided to include the item on its agenda on a biennial basis, as that would make it possible to monitor and stimulate industrial development, which was an integral element of the Fourth United Nations Development Decade. It was therefore to be hoped that Governments would continue to formulate clear policies on the subject which formed an integral part of their national development plans and were compatible with the policies pursued vis-à-vis human development, democracy and popular participation.

17. Developing countries were currently endeavouring to devise industrial development policies aimed at furthering their economic and social development in an environmentally sound way, while at the same time encouraging savings and foreign and domestic investment. For their part, the industrialized countries should help the developing countries by striving to create an international economic climate conducive to economic growth and by improving access to their markets for the products of developing countries.

18. The right balance should be struck between the private and public sectors, between industrial production for the national and for the international market and, in particular, between the small and medium-sized enterprises and the larger enterprises. Attention should also be given to industrial development in both rural and urban areas.

19. The training of men and women was of the utmost importance in the interests of developing indigenous entrepreneurial capacity, which in turn would foster the development of the private industrial sector. At the same time, efforts should be made to enhance the efficiency of those industrial activities remaining in the public sector, notably by eliminating underutilization of existing industrial capacity, lack of maintenance, mismanagement and technological obsolescence.

(Mrs. van der Heijden, Netherlands)

20. As the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development drew nearer, it was clear that development must be environmentally sound in order to be sustainable. The industrial sector too had a vital role to play in the application of environmentally sound technologies and, in that connection, the conference to be held by UNIDO in Copenhagen would be of great value. Exchanges of information on such technologies should be strengthened and expanded and ways and means found to promote their transfer on preferential terms. In addition, the technology selected should always match the methods of production, real needs and state of development of the industry concerned.

21. While domestic supply and demand should not be neglected, liberalization of and access to markets and foreign direct investment were important in order to promote export-oriented industries and industrial efficiency. Foreign investors could also make an important contribution to the alleviation of poverty. The developing countries should therefore continue to devise investment policies capable of attracting foreign investment and adopt fully transparent regulations, so as to ensure fair competition among the countries seeking to attract such investment. In that connection, the European Community welcomed the initiative of the Greek Government to convene in Athens on 4 November 1991, in cooperation with UNIDO, the Second Consultation on the Building Materials Industry, which would offer a forum for a productive exchange of views between officials and investors from the developed and developing countries.

22. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization had a major role to play in ensuring interagency coordination and, in so doing, it should pay special attention to the needs of the least developed countries, in accordance with the Programme of Action adopted by the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries held in Paris.

23. Mr. ZIARAN (Islamic Republic of Iran) endorsed the remarks made by the representative of Ghana on behalf of the Group of 77 and thanked the Secretary-General for his informative report on industrial development cooperation (A/46/455).

24. Given the economic problems faced by developing countries, new industrial projects required adequate foreign investment. The international community should therefore explore ways of boosting the net flow of financial resources to the developing countries and granting them loans on favourable terms.

25. United Nations programmes for industrial development in the developing countries should be aimed at building up indigenous industrial capacity. Because most developing countries lacked the skilled manpower necessary, one of the prerequisites for their industrialization was access to technical services. To enable the developing countries to make rational choices, the national bodies responsible for industrial development should be strengthened. Moreover, given that return on investment was a long-term process and that technological innovation was developing very rapidly, it was

(Mr. Ziaran, Islamic Republic of Iran)

necessary for international cooperation to be oriented in such a way as to enable the developing countries to foresee the risks involved and make the best choices.

26. It must be recalled that without a supportive international environment, especially in trade and the transfer of technology, any endeavour by the developing countries in those areas was likely to founder. Thus, opening international markets to developing countries and accelerating the transfer of technology were crucially important. The developed countries should roll back protectionist measures in their uncompetitive industries.

27. Since regional cooperation could intensify the industrial development of developing countries, his delegation endorsed resolution GC.3/Res.18 of the UNIDO General Conference, concerning special programmes for the industrial development of Asia and the Pacific.

28. Given the importance of small- and medium-scale industries, the United Nations system should strengthen the national institutions of developing countries which dealt with the promotion of domestic investment, in order to facilitate the achievement of the target set at the second UNIDO General Conference, held in Lima in 1975; namely, that the developing countries should collectively account for at least 25 per cent of total world-wide industrial production by the year 2000.

29. Mr. ARKHIPOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the increased volume of international trade and direct foreign investment, and the rapid dissemination of technical advances, made it increasingly important to develop cooperation in the area of industrial development and to diversify and modernize productive activities in the developing countries. The Secretary-General's report (A/46/455), despite its brevity, was replete with useful information and recommendations in that area.

30. UNIDO was making ever-increasing efforts to facilitate the transition of the Eastern European countries and of the Soviet Union to a market economy, and its attention to the development of small- and medium-scale industries was particularly welcome. A truly viable sector of such industries would eventually have to be fully integrated with the modern industrial sector. The initial economic reforms undertaken in the Eastern European countries and in the Soviet Union, in particular, had shown that those countries did not have the necessary experience in that area and would require the assistance of UNIDO.

31. It would also be extremely useful to give all countries the benefit of the experience acquired in the strengthening of linkages between small- and medium-scale industries and larger enterprises. In that regard, his delegation endorsed the approach, taken at the recent meeting of ECE and ECLAC, of establishing parallels between the economic situation of the Latin American countries and that of the Eastern European countries, and felt that

(Mr. Arkhipov, USSR)

the development of regional cooperation between those two groups of countries was a very interesting prospect.

32. In modernizing the productive activities of developing countries, it was extremely important to promote the use of advanced and environmentally sound technologies and of modern management methods, and to coordinate measures aimed at helping countries to make full use of computers in the industrial sector. In that regard, it would be very useful for UNIDO to prepare the study of long-term world industrial structure proposed in paragraph 12 of the Secretary-General's report.

33. As to new directions in research, it would be interesting to study the methods and techniques necessary to convert defence industries into consumer industries, in view of the experience acquired and the prospects for cooperation in that area.

34. His delegation was prepared to participate in the consideration of that item, but felt that it would be more logical to refer it to UNIDO, as the United Nations body having competence on the subject.

35. Ms. STOKES (New Zealand) said that the Secretary-General's report (A/46/455) noted that the current technological revolution was bypassing large parts of the developing world and that efforts to seek realistic solutions to the problems of industrial development should not slacken. The small Pacific island States faced special difficulties because of both geographic isolation and limited resources, and New Zealand consistently bore that in mind in its development assistance programmes, especially in the context of the Pacific Islands Industrial Development Scheme, which sought to encourage cooperation between the private sector in those countries and New Zealand enterprises. In that regard, New Zealand acknowledged the important role of development banks and multilateral organizations in formulating and implementing industrial development strategies in the South Pacific and other regions.

36. UNIDO was the coordinating organ in the United Nations system having primary responsibility for promoting and accelerating industrial development and the transfer of industrial technology to developing countries. Some of its priorities for action would be considered under separate agenda items. However, New Zealand already recognized that UNIDO could play a special role in the South Pacific through its technical cooperation programmes and projects, and that it was particularly competent to promote the development of the private sector, which was in the best position to act as a catalyst for increased economic growth. Lastly, New Zealand was pleased to note that UNIDO had demonstrated its willingness to reform its administration, to rationalize its budget and to formulate innovative solutions to the problems faced by developing countries.

37. Mr. RUIZ DI GIORGIO (Chile) said that the question of industrial development in developing countries had become increasingly complex in recent

(Mr. Ruiz di Giorgio, Chile)

years. To participate in the world economy, such countries must have a solid and competitive industrial base which allowed them to take full advantage of their resources; yet they could not be competitive without paying their workers starvation wages, forgoing any type of social security or exploiting their natural resources until they were depleted.

38. Although developing countries unquestionably had primary responsibility for developing their own industries, the adverse effects of the unstable international economic situation and of recent political upheavals should not be underestimated. In the past two years, the international community had concentrated mainly on reviving the economies of the Central and Eastern European countries. The fact that the assistance granted was primarily oriented towards the industrial sector was itself irrefutable evidence of the importance of that sector for development. In short, assistance was going to already industrialized countries whose economies had failed, and not to those which could not become industrialized without adequate international financial aid. Moreover, the relaxing of international tensions should enable the considerable resources formerly committed to the arms race to be allocated for the harmonious and sustainable development of the developing countries, without encroaching on the aid granted to Central and Eastern Europe. If statements of intention did not translate into concrete action, the economic problems of the North would once again be solved to the detriment of development in the South.

39. The developing countries could modernize their productive activities only if they had access to technological progress without delay. However, technology transfers were infrequent and very often did not meet the needs of recipient countries, as shown by the problems of unemployment, pollution and resource depletion. It was therefore important to redefine objectives. Mankind had entered the information age; accordingly, the role which a country played in the community of nations depended upon its command of communications technology. In that area, too, there was the risk of a widening gap between the North and the South, which could well endanger international peace. Indeed, world peace and respect for human rights were possible only if the peoples of the developing countries could be given greater access to know-how, to markets and to international financing sources, which would substantially raise their living standards.

40. Mr. GIRON (Colombia) said that, during the 1980s, the growth rate of per capita industrial activity in the developing countries had been negative. The long-term prospects were extremely gloomy. Accordingly, it was necessary to adopt urgent measures to promote industrial development and the diversification and modernization of those countries' productive activities. In adopting resolution 45/196, the Assembly had again placed on the agenda the question of industrial development, which had been virtually neglected during the past 10 years. In coordinating the activities of the relevant international organizations, UNIDO had the capacity for action in the three areas defined in the resolution - human resources development, diversification

(Mr. Giron, Colombia)

and modernization - while taking into account national and regional requirements.

41. While it was true, as indicated in the report of the Secretary-General (A/46/455), that the developing countries were primarily responsible for promoting their industrial activities, it was nonetheless true that in order to do so, they required a favourable international climate and the cooperation of the international community, the organizations of the United Nations system and the international financial institutions. Such factors as access to the financial and technical means conducive to human resources development and to environmental protection, cooperation among developing countries and access to international markets showed that adjustments carried out by developing countries would be insufficient if they were not matched by action on the part of the industrialized countries.

42. The recommendations made by the Secretary-General deserved thorough consideration, especially those concerning effective coordination both between UNIDO and the World Bank and between UNIDO and the development-financing institutions, and the use of special trust funds to finance projects.

43. Lastly, the preparation by UNIDO of a study of long-term world industrial structure would make it possible to derive maximum benefit from the reports requested in resolution 45/196, paragraphs 9 and 10, which could not be presented at the current session.

44. Mr. GANTCHEV (Bulgaria) said that the task of coordination which was incumbent upon UNIDO was particularly complex in that in the developing countries the restructuring of the industrial sector was indispensable to the promotion of industrial development. In addition, there were such issues as the development of technological capability, the degradation of the environment caused by rapid industrialization and insufficient investment, especially in heavily indebted countries.

45. In Bulgaria, overall structural adjustment involved the technological and environmental restructuring of the industrial sector. Legal, fiscal, institutional and other reforms were under way with a view to privatization and the breakup of monopolies. Bulgaria believed that a precondition of industrial development was human resources development - promoting technological, managerial and entrepreneurial capabilities. For that reason, it participated, within the limits of its means, in the training programmes sponsored by UNIDO in that field, and would support a recommendation by the General Assembly concerning human resources development.

46. In that context, it was particularly important to improve the access of small- and medium-scale industries to financing, and UNIDO could play an important role in that area. As recommended by the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC), it would also be appropriate to strengthen the role of UNIDO in coordinating the activities of other United Nations bodies promoting

(Mr. Gantchev, Bulgaria)

environmentally sustainable industrial development and clean, low-waste, energy-efficient technologies, as well as technical assistance in pollution control.

47. Bulgaria was looking forward to the UNIDO International Conference on Ecologically Sustainable Industrial Development to be held in Denmark.

48. Mr. WEIGGEN (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) said that the promotion of agro-industries played a key role in the industrialization of developing countries. FAO believed that agro-industry was an integral part of sustainable rural development. The rural population was central to the development framework advocated by FAO. The aim was to promote integrated production systems management and the diversification of rural incomes.

49. Thus, FAO was helping to introduce small-scale processing industries which could contribute to import substitution while offering value-added export possibilities. A case in point was the processing of medicinal plants, spices and aromatics. The value-added objective was carried through to by-products utilization, since the waste products of many natural-fibre processes could be used to stabilize soils.

50. In the past, products from developing countries had often been low-priced, mainly because of a lack of confidence in their quality. Accordingly, Member States were being assisted in improving the quality and diversifying the end-uses of their products. In cooperation with UNIDO, FAO had been preparing fisheries development programmes for West African countries.

51. As indicated in the Secretary-General's report (A/46/455), developing countries should have access to emerging technologies, particularly biotechnology.

52. Furthermore, if development was to benefit the population, it must not be limited to the public sector. It was therefore important that Government policies and international action should be directed towards promotion of the private sector. From that point of view, FAO assistance, including training and the dissemination of information was an important component of international efforts. Moreover, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 had stressed that an increase in agricultural production in developing countries could be a basis for industrial growth and diversification of their economic structure.

53. Mr. SANGA (United Republic of Tanzania), endorsing the statement made by Ghana on behalf of the Group of 77, said that the role of UNIDO was even more crucial now than ever before and was particularly appreciated, especially in the least developed countries, as in the case of the United Republic of Tanzania itself.

(Mr. Sanga, United Republic of Tanzania)

54. The Secretary-General's report (A/46/455) clearly indicated that the developing countries were still very far from reaching the target set at the Lima Conference of 25 per cent of the world manufacturing value added to be achieved by the year 2000. His delegation therefore endorsed both the call by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 for a phasing out of industrial units in the developed countries in areas in which the developing countries' industries were more efficient and the recommendation made by the Secretary-General in paragraph 12 of his report on the preparation by UNIDO of a study of long-term world industrial structure.

55. In follow-up to the report submitted by the Secretary-General's Expert Group on African Commodity Problems, Africa had recommended the establishment of a commodity diversification fund and the General Assembly, by adopting the report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole for the Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development would be recommending a study for the establishment of such a fund.

56. The United Republic of Tanzania endorsed all the UNIDO priorities set out in paragraph 16 of the Secretary-General's report (A/46/455). It was, moreover, one of the very few countries to have carried out a feasibility study on endogenous capacity building.

57. With regard to paragraphs 37 and 38, the main problem was the lack of available resources for the development of industrial skills, which meant that external assistance was essential.

58. More specifically with regard to paragraph 38, it was to be hoped that the role of UNIDO in the implementation of the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development would be strengthened.

59. His delegation fully endorsed paragraphs 55 and 56 of the Secretary-General's report and expected much from the outcome of the symposium on the industrial development of the least developed countries which was to be held in Vienna.

60. International cooperation for industrial development in developing countries would be of benefit not only to the developing countries themselves but also to the entire international community, since without industrial development economic measures could only alleviate the symptoms of problems without eliminating their cause.

61. The countries of southern Africa had addressed the problem of manufacturing value added in the framework of the Southern African Development Coordination Conference. Among the objectives for industrial development in the region were the creation of at least half a million new jobs in the manufacturing sector by the year 2000, an increase in savings and investments

(Mr. Sanga, United Republic of Tanzania)

to levels where self-sustained growth became possible, and the development and import of appropriate technology to improve the region's industrial base.

62. The growing trend in Africa towards an integrated industrial economy was not reflected in paragraph 7 of the Secretary-General's report. That did not in any way detract from the importance of UNIDO activities in Africa; Africa should continue to be given due priority with respect to industrial development through the treaty establishing an African economic community, starting at the subregional level, such as the Southern African Development Coordination Conference.

63. Mr. JASINSKI (Poland) said that industrialization, far from being an end in itself, was a means by which the individual could achieve progress and develop. In addition to high growth rates, the following important aspects of industrialization should be stressed. The Central and Eastern European countries' economic difficulties were partly attributable to their lack of an appropriate institutional framework. UNIDO should strengthen its assistance in that field, and it would be very useful if it could enhance its cooperation with financial institutions.

64. The role of small- and medium-sized businesses was also very important. It should be noted, in that connection, that Warsaw would host the next international small business congress.

65. Poland attached great importance to interregional cooperation and would like to extend such cooperation, especially with Latin America.

66. His delegation wished, lastly, to express its appreciation for the action taken by UNIDO.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

67. The CHAIRMAN said that as some reports had not been submitted on time, the Committee would have to change its programme of work. Specifically, in connection with item 12 (l), on the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa, since the Conference of African Ministers of Industry had not yet submitted its programme, it would seem that the General Assembly would not be able to consider that issue at the current session.

68. Mr. GATHUNGU (Kenya) said that he would like to have more details on the reasons for the delay, since the Second Decade had already begun.

69. Mr. STOBY (Secretary of the Committee) said that, in the text it had adopted at Dakar, the Conference had indicated that the relevant meeting had had to be deferred owing to unforeseen circumstances and the report could therefore not be submitted to the General Assembly. The Conference had also decided at Dakar to submit the report to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
13th meeting
held on
Monday, 14 October 1991
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 13th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. BURKE (Ireland)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

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21 October 1991
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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (A/46/3, A/46/19, A/46/163, A/46/171-E/1991/61, A/46/132-E/1991/58, A/46/171-E/1991/61, A/46/204-E/1991/80 and Add.1 and 2, A/46/263-E/1991/88, A/46/288, A/46/467, A/46/477, A/46/493, A/46/520; A/C.2/46/2; A/C.2/46/L.8, L.10, L.11 and L.12; E/1991/432 (Supplement No. 11))

1. Mr. AHMED (Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs) said that the Special High-level Meeting of the Economic and Social Council had addressed the important issue of the impact of the recent evolution of East-West relations on the growth of the world economy, in particular on the economic growth and development of the developing countries, as well as on international economic cooperation. In the interim since the summer session of the Economic and Social Council, the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs had updated its economic projections for Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union; those projections indicated that the decline in economic activity in those countries was even more severe than had originally been anticipated. It was estimated that industrial production had fallen by 15 per cent. Trade among the countries of the region had collapsed: exports from Eastern European countries to the Soviet Union appeared to have been reduced by half and their imports from the Soviet Union to have declined by one fifth. Yet most of the countries with economies in transition had been carefully following strategies for transformation and would accordingly need a substantial amount of technical and financial assistance. It was also clear that the rest of the world had a stake in their success. As the Council had reaffirmed, that complementarity of interests should not be at the expense of the developing countries. There was in fact some concern that the demand for resources arising from the major transformations taking place in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union might outstrip the available resources. The momentous political changes in the world brought with them the possibility that genuine disarmament might finally be achieved. In the long run, gains from reduced military expenditures might represent a major new source of resources. Every country needed, therefore, to adopt growth-oriented policies to ensure that adequate capital was available and that the "peace dividend" was used judiciously to meet the needs of progress and development. Equally important was a clear understanding as to how multilateral and bilateral resources were to be allocated among developing countries and those with economies in transition.

2. The AIDS pandemic had reached severe proportions. The report of the World Health Organization (WHO) which was before the Committee (A/46/171) estimated that 8 to 10 million adults and 1 million children were infected by HIV worldwide. It was projected that the cumulative total of HIV-infected persons would reach 40 million by the year 2000. The infection was still spreading both in the areas already affected and was also into new regions such as South-East Asia. That might lead to an upward revision of the current estimates. While the world was fervently hoping for a medical solution to the

(Mr. Ahmed)

deadly scourge, it would be imprudent, to say the least, not to anticipate some severe problems in those countries which were least able to withstand further shocks to the health of their populations and to their socio-economic systems. A recent publication on the AIDS epidemic and its demographic consequences, prepared by the Population Division in cooperation with WHO, provided for the first time a set of standard input parameter values for epidemiological models, which could be used by all researchers and policy makers. Those standard values would allow for a better understanding of the dynamics of the pandemic and the potential effect of interventions.

3. Preparations were under way for the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development. The Population Division had been working in close collaboration with the Secretary-General of the Conference and the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); six technical expert group meetings were planned for 1992 and 1993 and would cover the following topics: interrelationships between population, development and environment; population policies and programmes; population and the status of women; population growth and ageing; family planning and health; and changes in the distribution of population.

4. Finally, he noted that the report of the Committee for Development Planning (E/1991/32) examined the question of the impact of the reforms in Eastern Europe and the USSR on the developing countries, the importance of which had been stressed by the Economic and Social Council. Chapter V of the report contained recommendations for criteria for identifying least developed countries. In the view of the Committee, those new criteria would correct a number of anomalies which had arisen over the past two decades. The Economic and Social Council had had intensive discussions on that issue and had decided that further consideration of the proposed new criteria should be carried out by the General Assembly, taking into account the views expressed by the Council. Following its examination of the case of Namibia, the Committee for Development Planning had concluded that that country had not met the existing criteria, as they were currently applied, owing primarily to its relatively high per capita GDP; none the less, the Committee had recommended that the international community should, for a number of years, adopt special measures in favour of Namibia in order to assist it, as a newly independent nation, in mobilizing its considerable economic potential. For its part, the Council had invited donor Governments and agencies to grant Namibia assistance comparable to that provided to a least developed country.

5. Mrs. BRUGGEMANN (World Health Organization) introduced the report of the Director-General of the World Health Organization on the global strategy for the prevention and control of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) (A/46/171), which had been prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 45/187.

(Mrs. Bruggemann, WHO)

6. The report provided an overview of the epidemiological situation on a global scale and highlighted the increased efforts by United Nations bodies to promote AIDS prevention and control activities. The report was based, inter alia, on the report of the Director-General of WHO to the Forty-fourth World Health Assembly and contained contributions from United Nations organizations which were members of the Inter-agency Advisory Group established by WHO to coordinate the AIDS activities of the United Nations system.

7. In view of the fact that the report had been published in May 1991, it was already time to provide an update of the data it contained. As of 1 October 1991, a total of 418,403 cases of AIDS had been reported to WHO by 162 countries, an increase of 46,600 cases since 1 July 1991. Taking into account the number of cases not yet diagnosed or reported, WHO estimated that approximately 1.5 million persons, including 500,000 children, had developed AIDS since the beginning of the pandemic some 10 years earlier, and that at least 9 to 11 million persons had been infected with HIV.

8. The rate of new infections appeared to be slowing down in certain industrialized countries; that apparent stabilization was, however, misleading because the number of victims continued to be on the rise in urban areas, especially among population groups with high rates of drug abuse and sexually transmitted diseases. The pandemic was gaining ground in the developing countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, but also in Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. Thus, according to WHO projections, by the year 2000, 25 to 30 million adults could be infected by HIV, 90 per cent of them in the developing countries. WHO estimated that 5 to 10 million children would be born with HIV during that same period and that the total number of HIV-infected persons would reach 30 to 40 million by the end of the decade. Although the number of new cases would continue to increase in sub-Saharan Africa, the new data indicated that, during the second half of the 1990s, the number of new cases of infection would be greater in Asia than in Africa.

9. The projected number of infant and child deaths from AIDS might increase child mortality rates by as much as 50 per cent during the 1990s in most of the countries of sub-Saharan Africa. Those frightening statistics meant that, in many countries, the gains in the areas of immunization and maternal and child health care could be wiped out.

10. Both General Assembly resolution 45/187, adopted in December 1990, and World Assembly resolution 43.10, adopted in May 1990, urged the promotion of the vital role that women and young people could play in the national programmes for the prevention and control of AIDS. WHO activities in that regard were accordingly aimed at preventing HIV transmission to and by women and at ensuring the full participation of women in AIDS prevention and control programmes. The often subordinate status of women in the family and in society increased their vulnerability to the infection; WHO was accordingly striving to promote activities to remedy that situation.

(Mrs. Bruggemann, WHO)

11. In efforts to control the pandemic, the first and foremost priority of WHO was to strengthen national programmes, particularly in the area of management. A training course for programme managers was being developed to help them to decide upon priority strategies, planning, monitoring and evaluation. WHO had also supported the efforts of the many non-governmental organizations involved, since they were essential to effective prevention and control of AIDS.

12. WHO had also defined a number of other areas of focus for the early 1990s, including intensification of medical research, counteracting discrimination against HIV-infected persons, strengthening preventive action and the multisectoral response, and the prevention of complacency at local, national and international levels.

13. WHO called for action by Governments to make AIDS prevention a priority at once. That meant that leaders must speak openly about sexual behaviour, HIV infections and AIDS in the context of the sexual, cultural and religious norms of their countries. The entire international community must address the issue without delay.

14. The national response to AIDS must be multisectoral, involving collaboration between different ministries and groupings in the fields of health, education, tourism, transport and the social sectors concerned with the development of human resources. Formal or informal national programmes obtained results when they emphasized prevention of sexual transmission of HIV through safer sexual practices.

15. Part III of the Director-General's report dealt with collaboration within the United Nations system, which was crucial for ensuring a multisectoral response to the social and economic consequences of HIV/AIDS. WHO was actively cooperating with UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO, ILO, UNFPA, the World Bank and other bodies of the United Nations system, in order to meet the challenge facing the international community.

16. World AIDS Day, on 1 December 1991, offered an opportunity to stimulate action by groups and individuals who did not yet feel personally involved in the pandemic. Vast numbers of people were still ignorant of the facts about HIV/AIDS and WHO would spare no effort to ensure that everyone fully understood the gravity of the threat to health, human rights, socio-economic development and the well-being of all peoples. Every day that passed meant another 5,000 people infected with HIV.

17. Mr. KUFOUR (Ghana), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, noted that the report of the Economic and Social Council covered a vast number of very important subjects and showed that the Council had to coordinate the activities of very differing organs of the United Nations system working in the economic and social fields to promote the general well-being of mankind. It was a heavy responsibility and a challenge that was difficult to meet. One

(Mr. Kufour, Ghana)

need only look at the conditions prevailing in the developing countries to realize that the objectives were far from being achieved. The enormous resources available had not been fully mobilized nor adequately used to eliminate poverty, hunger and disease, despite impressive scientific and technical advances.

18. The Group of 77 had long been concerned about the need for the Council to fulfil its responsibilities effectively; it had submitted various proposals for its restructuring and revitalization, which had resulted in the adoption by the General Assembly at its resumed forty-fifth session of resolution 45/264 which provided, among other things, that the Council should hold only one substantive session a year; a dialogue was also planned with the heads of secretariat of the financial institutions, which should help to advance coordination. During the current session, the General Assembly should also review the activities of the Council's subsidiary bodies with a view to making them better able to respond to the needs of the developing countries.

19. Various important proposals had been submitted to the Council at its second regular session of 1991, including one from the Secretary-General concerning the convening of an international conference on development financing. The Group of 77 warmly welcomed that proposal and considered that the necessary measures should be taken at the current session.

20. At the Special High-level Meeting on the impact of the recent evolution of East-West relations on the growth of the world economy, held during the second session, a number of developing countries had expressed their concern about the possible diversion of resources allocated for their development. However, the current changes also offered an opportunity for increased trade and the strengthening of international economic cooperation in the general interest.

21. Another important question considered by the Council at its second regular session of 1991 was the strengthening of coordination of humanitarian aid in emergencies. The Foreign Ministers of the Group of 77 had reaffirmed the principles to be observed in that respect: such aid must always respect the sovereignty of the countries affected and no organization could intervene without prior consent. The development of such aid would, of course, require additional resources, which would be justified because such action concerned the relief of poverty, which was an integral part of the mandate of the Economic and Social Council.

22. Mr. POST (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the States members of the European Community, said that the second regular session of the Economic and Social Council had shown that the Council was in transition and was transforming itself into a forum in which dialogue and exchange of views were of primordial importance.

(Mr. Post, Netherlands)

23. He would focus on a number of issues dealt with in the report of the Council (A/46/3): the Special High-level Meeting on the impact of the recent evolution of East-West relations on the growth of the world economy; the restructuring of the socio-economic sectors of the United Nations; the AIDS pandemic; transnational corporations; and the composition of the Group of Least Developed Countries. In connection with the High-level Meeting, it had been pointed out that the world trend towards political pluralism and economic liberalization had been reinforced by the developments in Eastern Europe. It now seemed generally recognized that democracy and human rights were a prerequisite for economic and social development, as were external assistance and a favourable international economic climate. While it was difficult at the present juncture to assess the effects of the developments in Eastern Europe on the developing countries, it could nevertheless be said that, in the longer run, the reforms in that region would be beneficial to the developing countries, both politically, because of the emergence of new ideas on how to cope with global problems, and economically, because of new opportunities in markets and resources.

24. It was true that certain developing countries might face uncertainties and risks during the transition period because of the restructuring of trade patterns in Eastern Europe, but they were likely to be offset by the opening of new markets in the region.

25. The flow of direct foreign investment to Eastern Europe was not yet very substantial, but it might be expected to take off once the transition had been consolidated and the necessary conditions created for higher productivity. As for the effects on capital flows to developing countries, he reiterated that resources allocated to Eastern Europe, mainly through the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, did not and would not lead to any diversion of the funds allocated to the developing countries. The new developments in Eastern Europe did not distract the attention of the European Community from the persistent problems of the developing countries.

26. Turning to the restructuring of the social and economic sectors of the United Nations, he said that it was essential for the Organization to be able to discuss effectively the new socio-economic issues of interest to the international community and to examine in depth the cross-sectoral issues related to socio-economic development. The European Community would present its views on that issue under agenda item 137, but wished to emphasize at once the desirability of rationalizing some of the structures of the Council and the General Assembly in the economic and social field.

27. The third issue was that of the AIDS pandemic, which required the continuous attention of the international community. The WHO estimate that by the year 2000 a total of 30 million adults might be infected by HIV was of great concern and meant that the struggle against the disease must be continued. The European Community appreciated the efforts made by the United Nations system and other international organizations in that respect and

(Mr. Post, Netherlands)

strongly supported the leading role taken by WHO based on the Global AIDS Strategy. One of the priorities of the Global Programme was the continuation of efforts to avoid discrimination against HIV-infected persons and AIDS sufferers. In 1988 the Forty-first World Health Assembly had urged member States to protect the human rights and dignity of AIDS sufferers. The European Community supported that appeal and urged countries which had imposed travel and immigration restrictions on HIV-infected people to lift them. The European Community had undertaken a number of activities to combat AIDS. It had set up a programme to assist the developing countries in Africa and the Caribbean and Pacific areas to control the spread of HIV infection and donated annually large amounts to 120 projects in 90 developing countries for combating the pandemic. It also contributed substantially to the WHO Global Programme on AIDS.

28. With respect to the fourth issue, transnational corporations, he noted that the member States of the European Community had participated constructively in the informal consultations on the subject at the General Assembly's forth-fifth session and in the discussions of the working group on the question. Unfortunately, the participants had been unable to reach an agreement on the outstanding issues regarding the Code of Conduct, as some delegations had considered that it would be better to wait for the results of the Uruguay Round and the conclusion of UNCTAD VIII and the United Nations Conference on the Environment.

29. The fifth issue concerned the composition of the Group of Least Developed Countries, i.e., the question of the criteria to be applied in identifying such countries. The member States of the Community welcomed the proposals put forward by the Committee on Development Planning (CDP) in its report (E/1991/32), which provided updated and more relevant criteria for the least developed countries and improved the prospects for the recognition of that category by donor organizations. As the CDP approach was based on an in-depth analysis, it would be inadvisable to reopen debate on the details of its proposal, which would only lead to the introduction of elements of political expediency which could give the outside world the impression that the criteria for classification as a least developed country were arbitrary and subjective. With regard to the proposed revision of the list of least developed countries, the European Community was prepared to discuss the possible implications of the proposed changes.

30. Mr. SERSALE DI CERISANO (Argentina) welcomed the reorganization of the Economic and Social Council, which should enable it to conduct its work more effectively thanks to greater coordination of the activities of United Nations bodies.

31. He drew attention to two questions dealt with by the Economic Committee and on which the Council had adopted resolutions: trade and development and agriculture.

(Mr. Sersale di Cerisano, Argentina)

32. In the case of trade and development, resolution 1991/52 amounted to a commitment by all countries to end trade protectionism. Paragraph 2 contained a still-valid analysis of the situation and established a link between trade and economic growth. Paragraph 3 emphasized the scope of the unilateral trade liberalization measures adopted by an increasing number of developing countries. It was unfortunate that most of the industrialized countries continued to follow policies which distorted international trade, particularly as concerned access to markets.

33. With regard to agriculture (resolution 1991/53), he welcomed the emergence of a new concept, that of "sustainable agricultural development". That concept was linked to the problems of food production growth and productivity in the developing countries. The resolution called for new initiatives by all countries to encourage sustainable agricultural development and thus established a link between the problems of the developing countries and the actions taken by the international community. He emphasized that some methods of intensive agricultural production had negative environmental effects and that the countries subsidizing agriculture were carrying out contradictory policies with respect to the goals of preserving the environment and of sustainable agricultural production.

34. In the case of the European Economic Community, its policy of heavy subsidies had negative effects for the developing countries, as the producing countries with low production costs were constrained to employ intensive cultivation methods which led to erosion and the policy had harmful effects on the environment in Europe itself, leading to the disappearance of certain species, water pollution as a result of excessive use of pesticides and over-use of fertilizers.

35. All those measures, which were internal in one region, in fact had worldwide consequences. The Council's resolution was a first appeal to the United Nations system to give serious study to the relations between agricultural protectionism and damage to the environment. In that connection, he welcomed the efforts made by FAO and the Netherlands Government during the Conference on Sustainable Agricultural Development held in April 1991. As the results expected had not yet all been achieved, it was to be hoped that further action would be taken.

36. Mr. TURIANSKY (Ukraine) said that the Council's second regular session had taken place at a time when confrontation was yielding to broad international cooperation for lasting economic development and to ensure a decent standard of living for all. The United Nations should therefore assume a new role in the economic and social fields and adapt its structures to the new political realities.

(Mr. Turiansky, Ukraine)

37. The international community's efforts in that direction had led to the adoption of General Assembly resolution 45/264, which set out the guidelines for the restructuring of the Council from the point of view of implementing the goals of the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation adopted by the Assembly at its eighteenth special session. The in-depth consideration given to that Declaration had shown the universal interest taken in the implementation of the policies agreed to.

38. His delegation supported that resolution, including its provisions for rationalizing the socio-economic sectors of the United Nations, and was glad that during the high-level discussion almost all the Member States and the United Nations system itself had stated their readiness to promote that restructuring and to strengthen and revitalize the Economic and Social Council's activities in the light of its new role.

39. The restructuring of the Economic and Social Council should not be merely administrative and organizational. In his delegation's opinion, the transformation should also be qualitative and should broaden the conceptual framework of the Council's activity. That was why it welcomed the proposals to set up within the Council an economic security or international development council with broad authority to deal with questions of multilateral cooperation in the economic and social and related fields.

40. The holding of a Special High-level Meeting on the impact of the recent changes in East-West relations on world economic growth obviously represented a major development. That discussion was of particular importance for Ukraine, an Eastern European country which today was striving to play a significant role in international political life and international economic relations. The support demonstrated at the current meeting for the processes of democratization and economic reforms taking place in Eastern Europe was extremely important.

41. Underscoring its usefulness, he said that the high-level discussion should be attended by heads of government or their representatives; the Council could thus serve as a framework for exchanges of views and intergovernmental consultations on current world economic and social problems. Furthermore, the issues to be discussed should be chosen very carefully.

42. His delegation expressed satisfaction that the Council had considered, at its July session, the question of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to address and mitigate the consequences of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear-power plant; that discussion had led to the adoption by consensus of Council resolution 1991/51. The resolution demonstrated the ability of the Council to solve also regional and national problems and helped to enhance its authority. He took that opportunity to express his delegation's appreciation to the States that had actively helped to bring about the adoption of that resolution and those that had pledged

(Mr. Turiansky, Ukraine)

contributions, at the conference organized on 22 September 1991, to mobilize support in order to deal with the consequences of the accident.

43. The debate that had taken place at the summer session on strengthening the capacity of the Organization to cope with emergency situations had also been extremely interesting. The United Nations was the best organization for coordinating international cooperation in order to mitigate the effects of disasters and to prevent them. In that connection, it would be essential to establish the post of a United Nations special coordinator for providing emergency assistance. Furthermore, the role of the Council in considering questions related to the coordination of humanitarian aid should be strengthened.

44. Far from wishing to carry out an exhaustive analysis of the results of the Council's second session, which had focused on many very important questions relating to international cooperation in the socio-economic field, his delegation had sought only to underscore their main aspects and believed that the constructive approach which characterized the Committee's debates would enable it to draw up the necessary recommendations and decisions.

45. Mr. MOUSSA (Burkina Faso) said that the second regular session of the Economic and Social Council had taken place at a time which had been marked by events heralding the end of the cold war and when a new period favouring the strengthening of cooperation and dialogue between States had begun. He reaffirmed his country's support for the position expressed by Ghana on behalf of the Group of 77 and noted that almost all the resolutions of the Council had been adopted by consensus. What did results achieved by consensus mean however? Was it an expression of solidarity and a convergence of views on the major economic and social questions of the time? Or was it the harbinger of a new world order which would be dictated by a single power? In the first case, mankind would finally have begun to achieve the aspirations which its largest segment had striven so long to attain. Otherwise, mankind would have taken a step backward and the political pluralism that had been demanded so strongly in the internal legal order would have been purely and simply rejected at the international level.

46. Referring to the economic aspect of the Council's report, he supported the report submitted by the President of the South Commission and agreed with the need for a national effort and even a collective effort by increasing South-South cooperation, as well as solidarity and unity of action. Nevertheless, the developing countries, particularly African countries, were encountering enormous difficulties due to both external and domestic factors. The United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 had not achieved the success expected and the number of least developed countries continued to increase. A way must be found to renew hope and restore the necessary means for revitalizing economic growth. He welcomed the idea put forward by the Secretary-General of convening an international conference on development financing. That conference should

(Mr. Moussa, Burkina Faso)

serve to give impetus to the international preparation of a new world order. He also expressed satisfaction at the decision by the Japanese Government to organize an international conference in 1993 on development in Africa, with the participation of African heads of State. His delegation reaffirmed the need to maintain the MULPOCs (Multinational Programming and Operational Centres) in Africa because they helped to promote African integration. Those Centres should be strengthened through increased financial and human resources. Their role was essential and the results that they achieved should serve as beacons for the Pan-African economic community. Just as the poor state of transport hampered growth, collective action would make it possible to begin to open up land and air routes. The criteria for identifying the least developed countries, which had been considered by the Committee for Development Planning, should be based on viable economic indicators. The State concerned should be informed of the proposal to rescind least developed country status and the decision should take effect only after a reasonable period of time.

47. The time had come to restructure United Nations bodies, which must be more operational and more effective. Although his delegation supported Council decision 1991/277, he pointed out that that decision should aim only to strengthen the bodies in question, such as those dealing with science and technology for development, the utilization of new and renewable sources of energy, and cooperation between developing countries. Revitalization should not entail a systematic amputation of non-functional bodies but rather should provide the necessary impetus to ensure their smooth functioning.

48. Burkina Faso was a Sahelian country confronted with desertification and drought; it therefore welcomed all efforts to eliminate that scourge and its effects. Although he welcomed resolutions and decisions adopted for the benefit of most member countries and hoped that the Second Committee would follow the example of the Council, he hoped that those resolutions would be implemented in the field in order to provide real relief to most of the population groups which viewed the new order as synonymous with justice, peace, freedom and solidarity in development.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
14th meeting
held on
Tuesday, 15 October 1991
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 14th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. BARAC (Romania)
(Vice-Chairman)

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In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Barac (Romania), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued) (A/46/3, A/46/19, A/46/163, A/46/132-E/1991/58, A/46/171-E/1991/61, A/46/204-E/1991/80 and Add.1 and 2, A/46/263-E/1991/88, A/46/288, A/46/467, A/46/477, A/46/493, A/46/520; A/C.2/46/2, A/C.2/46/5; A/C.2/46/L.8 and Corr.1, L.10 and L.12; E/1991/32)

1. Mr. BABINGTON (Australia) said that the problem of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) was a source of growing concern, especially in view of the latest estimates of the World Health Organization (WHO), which set the number of AIDS-infected people by the end of the 1990s at 30-40 million, including 10 million children. The effects of the AIDS pandemic were particularly pronounced in developing countries, including those in the Asian and Pacific region, where the number of people infected by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) was growing at a pace similar to that observed in sub-Saharan Africa in the early 1980s, but with even greater potential for spread of the disease. Australia therefore fully supported the work undertaken by WHO and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in conjunction with other United Nations agencies, recipient Governments, non-governmental organizations and community-based groups to combat AIDS. The emphasis placed on that problem by UNDP was particularly encouraging. Australia expected that the General Assembly would adopt another strong resolution on AIDS at the current session, placing special emphasis on the plight of women and children, the need to intensify information-dissemination activities and the importance of multisectoral efforts to combat the disease.

2. The restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations was essential if the Organization was to respond effectively to the important development challenges facing the world in the 1990s. His delegation therefore looked forward to further progress in that area during the current session, particularly in the review of the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council.

3. Mr. AHMIA (Algeria) said that the Special High-level Meeting of the Economic and Social Council had been a valuable innovation, shedding important light on the economic implications that the recent evolution of East-West relations would have for the world as a whole. He regretted, however, that those discussions had not led to the adoption of a decision, although the concluding statement by the Chairman of the Meeting would provide a useful basis for future discussions. He welcomed the solemn commitment given by the developed countries that their assistance to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe would not in any way be detrimental to their assistance programmes to the developing countries. Those assurances had been one of the most valuable contributions made by the Meeting, and had been noted with

(Mr. Ahmia, Algeria)

satisfaction by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Group of 77 in their recent declaration (A/46/520).

4. In view of the success of the Special High-level Meeting, Algeria welcomed the decision by the General Assembly, in its resolution 45/264, to incorporate such high-level segments in all future sessions of the Council so that the Council could continue to monitor the impact of current developments.

5. With regard to assistance to the Palestinian people, Algeria remained deeply concerned by the ongoing deterioration of the social and economic situation in the occupied territories, a problem exacerbated by the policies of the Israeli authorities. Notable among those policies, which had reduced the Palestinian people to a state of despair, were the confiscation of Palestinian lands, the accelerated establishment of Jewish colonies in those territories in violation of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 and Security Council resolution 465 (1980), the diversion of water resources, the systematic destruction of the environment, the imposition of restrictive trade practices and the obstruction of economic and social assistance projects conducted by the United Nations and other organizations. In view of Israel's deliberate policy to dispossess the Palestinian people of its land and confiscate its water resources, the international community and the United Nations system must step up their economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people, working in close cooperation with the Palestine Liberation Organization, since a definitive solution to the Palestinian problem could only be achieved through the realization of the national rights of the Palestinian people.

6. Mr. MANSOR (Malaysia) said that, in view of the Economic and Social Council's vital role in the process of reforming the United Nations in the economic and social fields, the Council's restructured format had proved to be most encouraging. The Special High-level Meeting of the Council had represented a successful attempt to revitalize that body, although there was certainly still room for improvement of the framework and functioning of such meetings in the future. For instance, participants ought to engage more in open and free discussion from the floor, rather than reading prepared statements. Since many ideas that might provide guidance for future policy directions had emerged during the high-level segment, a proper record should be made of future proceedings.

7. Another new idea introduced at the Council's second regular session of 1991 - a mechanism for informal exchanges of views to facilitate active and direct dialogue among delegations - had also proved useful. The informal exchange of views on the report of the South Commission had enabled participants to understand the challenges facing the developing countries and the determination of those countries to pursue developmental goals despite an increasingly difficult international environment. The exchange of views on the economic, social and environmental consequences of the situation between Iraq and Kuwait had likewise contributed to a better understanding of the

(Mr. Mansor, Malaysia)

global impact of the Gulf conflict. The exchange of views on strengthening multilateral cooperation in international economic affairs had highlighted the fact that the goal of a better climate of international economic cooperation for development was still far from being achieved. It should be noted in that connection that, while many developing countries had taken steps to restructure and liberalize their economies to promote growth, the countries of the North had failed to respond by improving the international economic environment. Instead of pontificating on the importance of good macroeconomic policies and the free-market economy, the North should address the long-standing problems, including the external debt crisis which were at the root of the economic and social decline being experienced by many developing countries.

8. In that regard, the Commonwealth scheme for writing off two thirds, or $18 billion, of the official debt of the poorest countries - the "Trinidad and Tobago terms" - deserved special support from the international community. At the recent meeting of Commonwealth finance ministers at Kuala Lumpur, participants had agreed that those terms must be strongly promoted if they were to secure acceptance at the forthcoming Annual Meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) at Bangkok, for they offered the only formula that could alleviate the severe indebtedness of many low-income countries.

9. The discussions at the most recent session of the Council had also focused on the development of human resources, widely recognized as the most valuable resource a nation possessed. Developing human resources by enhancing the options of disadvantaged groups would in turn promote human freedoms and democracy. Women were one such disadvantaged group. Accordingly, Malaysia had joined in sponsoring Economic and Social Council resolution 1991/64, on the Summit on the Economic Advancement of Rural Women, to be held at Brussels in 1992. That meeting would make an important contribution to the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in 1995.

10. The Council had agreed that the recovery and development of Africa required further assistance. In that regard, the decision by the Government of Japan to convene an International Conference on Africa in 1993 was a laudable initiative. General agreement had also been reached on the need for a swift and coordinated response by the United Nations to man-made and natural emergencies. If a decision was to be taken on that question at the current session of the General Assembly, delegations must adopt an open and consensual approach, analysing the weaknesses of the current system and refraining from reaching hasty conclusions.

11. Another innovation at the Council's latest session, the informal discussions with the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, had also proved extremely useful. His delegation hoped to see not only a continuation of that dialogue, but also an improvement in its quality. The President of the World Bank should also be invited to participate in an

(Mr. Mansor, Malaysia)

informal dialogue, as another means of revitalizing the Council and helping it to strengthen international cooperation.

12. In view of the tight situation in the international capital market, it was clear that there was a need for a healthy discussion at the forty-sixth session of the question of development and financing and of the Secretary-General's proposal to convene an international conference on that subject, in keeping with Economic and Social Council decision 1991/274. Such a conference should focus not on new capital, but on an examination of existing resources which might be redirected towards internal development. Considerable savings could accrue if the developed countries were willing to cut back their defence spending and subsidies to agriculture and industry.

13. His delegation was optimistic about the outcome of the reform of the Economic and Social Council, but was concerned at the negative attitudes and manifestations of the North-South divide that had pervaded the Council's most recent session. It was imperative that members should develop a more positive spirit of cooperation, moving away from a rigid North-South approach and a donor-recipient mentality while displaying an openness to new ideas. The process of holding informal dialogues on a broad range of subjects could also be further developed.

14. Mr. KUDRYAVTSEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his country was completely satisfied with the results of the most recent session of the Economic and Social Council and had welcomed, in particular, the substantive and open exchange of opinions at the Special High-level Meeting, which had shed valuable light on the impact that the processes under way in Eastern Europe and the USSR and the new relations emerging between East and West would have on the entire international community. At that Meeting consensus had been reached on the need to provide assistance for the fundamental structural transformations under way in the USSR and Eastern Europe and to ensure the full integration of those countries into the world economic system.

15. Future high-level meetings should focus on clearly defined issues of real concern to all delegations. The agenda should therefore be set during the Council's organizational session earlier in the same year. Furthermore, discussions at such meetings and in other economic organs of the United Nations should, as far as possible, avoid ideological concerns, in the hope of revitalizing the Organization's work.

16. The informal exchange of views on the economic, social and environmental consequences of the Persian Gulf conflict had underscored the importance of an integrated approach to the resolution of world problems and, by extension, of a reorientation of the Organization's social, economic and humanitarian activities towards the strengthening of peace and security throughout the world. Article 65 of the Charter provided for the Economic and Social Council to furnish information to the Security Council and assist the Council in

(Mr. Kudryavtsev, USSR)

dealing with the non-military consequences of military and political conflicts; closer attention might therefore be given to that and other as yet unimplemented provisions of the Charter.

17. A positive achievement of the Council's second regular session of 1991 had been the adoption of a resolution dealing with the work of the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations, as that resolution paved the way for the increased participation of business circles in the Centre's work. Other useful resolutions had been adopted by the Council in such areas of concern as the Chernobyl problem, AIDS prevention, energy and population problems, regional cooperation, the economic development of the developing countries, and natural disasters. The Council's fruitful debate on the last subject led his delegation to hope that a decision would be adopted in due course which would considerably enhance the Organization's capacity to deal with natural disasters.

18. Above all, the USSR welcomed the new atmosphere that had prevailed at the session, an atmosphere which was characterized by common sense, a rejection of sterile, politicized rhetoric and a willingness to listen to the opinions and concerns of others, and reflected the new spirit of partnership and consensus underlying the Organization's economic work.

19. Mr. ZHANG Yesui (China), said that the work of the Economic and Social Council in 1991 marked an important step towards the realization of the objectives set forth in General Assembly resolution 45/264. The Special High-level Meeting held during the Council's second regular session had been the first of its kind in 20 years. The informal exchanges of views on various issues of concern to the entire international community, and especially to the developing countries, had also proved useful. The Council had demonstrated its ability to respond to new issues and new situations, and his delegation hoped that the revitalized Council would play a fuller role in focusing attention on the issue of development, enhancing international economic cooperation, and helping to address the urgent development problems faced by developing countries.

20. It was vital for the international community to overcome the severe shortage of financing available to developing countries for their development. His delegation therefore supported the Secretary-General's proposal, made at the opening of the Council's second regular session, to convene a conference on development financing, and hoped that a positive decision would be reached thereon at the current session of the General Assembly.

21. With 22 per cent of the world's population and only 7 per cent of its arable land, China attached great importance to population questions. Experience had shown that population growth was closely linked to economic development. Though excessive population growth was mainly a problem in the developing countries, its impact was universal. Wide-ranging international

(Mr. Zhang Yesui, China)

cooperation was needed to address the problem. His delegation thus supported the convening of the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994 and hoped that all parties concerned would work to ensure the success of the Conference preparations.

22. His delegation hoped that agreement could be reached on a code of conduct on transnational corporations on the basis of the current text. It was unfortunate that the tasks enumerated in General Assembly resolution 45/186 had gone unfulfilled. Given the expansion of international investment activities, negotiations on the code of conduct must not be delayed indefinitely. It was to be hoped that the current President of the General Assembly could arrange for their early resumption and that all countries would show greater willingness to cooperate in finalizing the code.

23. Mr. SILOVIC (Yugoslavia) said that the Special High-level Meeting at the Economic and Social Council's second regular session of 1991 had helped to make the Council's work more relevant. He wished to draw attention to two central points which the Chairman of the Meeting had made in his concluding statement: assistance to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe should not be at the expense of aid to the developing countries, and facilitation of the integration of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in the world economy would, in the long run, give a significant impetus to global growth and development.

24. In spite of some initial difficulties, the Special High-level Meeting had set a useful example, and its results would contribute to preparations for the following year's high-level segment within the Council's new framework. Notwithstanding any problems that might result, the ministerial segment of future sessions of the Council should have a formal outcome if the high-level meetings were not to become an ineffectual talking-shop. Another significant innovation at the recent Council session had been the informal exchanges of views on such topics as the report of the South Commission and the economic, social and environmental consequences of the situation between Iraq and Kuwait, and informal discussions with the Executive Secretaries of the regional commissions and the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund. There had also been important new initiatives, including the Secretary-General's timely proposal for the convening of a conference on development financing and the proposal to strengthen the United Nations mechanism for responding to disaster-related emergency situations, both of which required serious consideration and urgent decisions.

25. The deliberations of the resumed forty-fifth session of the General Assembly on enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations machinery in the economic and social sectors had led to a significant breakthrough in the revitalization of the Council as the central coordinating and policy-making body in the economic, social and related fields. The decision to hold a single substantive session of the Council dealing with economic and social issues in an integrated manner would contribute to a more

(Mr. Silovic, Yugoslavia)

rational, effective and meaningful functioning of that body. The sensitive issue of reform in the economic and social sectors called for a cautious and gradual approach, and the interests of all countries must be taken into account. The challenging tasks of reviewing the functioning of the subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly and the Council, the relationship between the Council and the Assembly and the Council's composition should be tackled with imagination and boldness.

26. Mr. MALONE (Canada) noted the positive steps which the Economic and Social Council had taken to rationalize its work. His delegation looked forward to further progress in that regard during the first consolidated session of the Council, to be held in June 1992.

27. Acknowledging the importance of population growth and dynamics to the achievement of sustainable development, he called for future work programmes of the Population Commission to address the need for effective action that went beyond research, analysis and planning activities to include activities related to the delivery of maternal and child health and family planning services. Generally speaking, it was essential to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of United Nations assistance to countries in implementing population programmes, particularly through the United Nations Population Fund.

28. In response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, the Canadian Government had established a national AIDS strategy, which provided support for education and prevention programmes, and an international programme of assistance to developing countries, which emphasized health promotion and education, strengthening the management of AIDS-related programmes by Governments and non-governmental organizations and helping Governments develop stronger linkages between AIDS programmes and other health programmes. Canada had committed a total of $83 million to the WHO Global Programme on AIDS and bilateral AIDS programmes, mainly in Africa and the Americas. His delegation believed that to provide ongoing efforts to monitor and mitigate the impact of the disease, to prevent its spread and to find a control or cure for AIDS should be encouraged, taking into account the vital role and special requirements of women and children in national AIDS programmes.

29. Canada was deeply concerned about the plight of the people in the Horn of Africa and had provided some $80 million of relief assistance to the region in 1991. Assistance had been channelled through the United Nations system and through non-governmental organizations working in the area. Canada was actively considering the inter-agency appeal issued on behalf of the countries of the Horn of Africa with a view to identifying priority areas for maximum assistance impact. The programme established to assist those countries had demonstrated how emergency humanitarian assistance coordination could work effectively at a global level.

30. Canada remained committed to the concept of multilateral food aid and attached great importance to the revision of the General Regulations of the World Food Programme.

(Mr. Malone, Canada)

31. The Committee for Development Planning was to be commended for its expeditious and careful review of the criteria for identifying least developed countries. Canada supported the establishment of a more relevant set of criteria and welcomed the Committee's efforts to introduce a degree of automaticity in the way in which countries were added to and removed from the list. The recommendations made by experts in the matter should be heeded; otherwise serious consideration to the advisability of retaining a category that could not command unanimous support should be considered.

32. Mr. MARKS (United States of America) was gratified to note that the process of restructuring and revitalizing the Economic and Social Council was bearing fruit. The most recent session of the Council had reached an unusually high degree of consensus in resolutions which were more focused, less contentious and fewer in number than was customary. The discussion on resource flows to the developing world in the context of the integration of the Eastern European countries into the world economy would contribute to further consideration of that important question. The Council's discussion of the consequences of the Gulf crisis testified to its potential as a forum for the analysis of current events, while the discussions on the designation of a coordinator for humanitarian assistance provided a useful example of the work the Council could do as a de facto preparatory committee for the General Assembly.

33. His delegation looked forward to seeing more dramatic changes as a result of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 45/177. Reforms should aim at improving coordination between the Secretariat and the agencies and between the United Nations system and other intergovernmental bodies. The changes made should provide the Council with a number of more clearly differentiated roles: a forum for discussion, an intergovernmental body for the review of United Nations agencies, an arm of the General Assembly in the economic and social fields and a de facto preparatory committee for the Assembly.

34. The Assembly's review of the operations of its subsidiary bodies and those of the Economic and Social Council should establish whether the mandates of those bodies were still valid, their organization and resources appropriate and their product of value; any reforms of those bodies should be carefully thought out, gradual and continuous.

35. His delegation had been proud to support Israel's application for membership in the Economic Commission for Europe and regarded the vote in favour of Israel's admission as a step towards that country's full integration and participation in the Economic and Social Council and United Nations activities. The normalization of relations between Israel and the United Nations could only help broader efforts to achieve peace in the Middle East.

36. He welcomed strong international support for efforts to control AIDS. The World Health Organization should remain the central coordinating agency for those efforts, but discussions in the General Assembly were a useful means

(Mr. Marks, United States)

of focusing public attention and encouraging officials to exert pressure on their Governments for increased action.

37. He concurred with the recent recommendations of the Committee for Development Planning concerning least developed country status and welcomed the establishment of a more realistic criteria for determining inclusion in that category. However, individual agencies should still be able to use their own criteria in determining which countries were least developed for specific funding purposes.

38. Economic and Social Council resolution 1991/69 on assistance to the Palestinian people had been severely unbalanced and had not fostered the creation of an atmosphere conducive to peace. The issues raised in the resolution related to the final status of the occupied territories and must be addressed through direct negotiations. Resolution 1991/54, on the activities of transnational corporations in South Africa, had failed to acknowledge the progress that had been made in that country and was not framed in a way that would foster the continued dismantling of apartheid or support the negotiation process.

39. With regard to the call for an international conference on development financing, delegations should consider whether such a conference was necessary in the light of the ongoing work of the strengthened international debt strategy of IMF and the World Bank. The outcome of the Annual Meeting of those institutions, currently taking place in Thailand, would also have to be borne in mind.

The meeting rose at 4.40 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
15th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 16 October 1991
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 15th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ZIARAN (Islamic Republic of Iran)
(Vice-Chairman)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued) (A/46/3, A/46/19, A/46/132-E/1991/58, A/46/163, A/46/171-E/1991/61, A/46/204-E/1991/80 and Add.1 and 2, A/46/263-E/1991/88, A/46/288, A/46/467, A/46/477, A/46/493, A/46/520; A/C.2/46/2, A/C.2/46/5; A/C.2/46/L.8 and Corr.1, L.10, L.11 and L.12; E/1991/32)

1. Mr. NATHON (Hungary) said that Hungary was embarked on a bold process of transition that would enable it to join the community of developed democracies. Striving to eliminate the consequences of four decades of planned economy and a monolithic one-party political system, his Government was working towards the rapid establishment of a true market economy. The transition was a complex phenomenon that called for an attack on many fronts, because the institutions, the legal framework, the enterprises and everything else had to be created.

2. Such radical changes had negative effects as well, substantial price increases and inflation in particular, and thus at the same time a solid social safety net must be established. Hungary was ready to assume the sacrifices such an undertaking entailed, but believed that only a favourable international economic climate could ensure the success of the transformation under way in Hungary and elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe, itself of primary importance both for Europe and for the world as a whole.

3. Hungary was ready to face free competition and the laws of the market and to open up its own domestic market, and from its partners it was expecting not assistance but mutually advantageous economic cooperation. In that connection, it welcomed the attitude taken by the European Community, as reaffirmed in the statement made in the Committee by the representative of the Netherlands on behalf of the Community.

4. The priority his country accorded to Europe did not mean that it did not wish to develop economic relations with other countries. On the contrary, it had already introduced, at the initiative of the Government of the Netherlands, a programme of tripartite cooperation by which the Netherlands provided assistance to Hungary to develop its technical, scientific and educational ties with third-world nations. Although limited, that programme was already working well, and some other Western European countries had shown interest in participating in it.

5. His delegation welcomed the fact that the Economic and Social Council had at its Special High-level Meeting the previous summer focused on the recent developments in Central and Eastern Europe. As many speakers had stated in the current debate, the attention given to those changes in no way diminished the commitments already assumed by the industrialized nations vis-à-vis the developing countries.

(Mr. Nathon, Hungary)

6. At the same time, when it came to specific commitments and benefits, the needs and capabilities of countries belonging to certain categories should be re-examined from time to time. As the Committee for Development Planning had indicated in the section of its report (E/1991/32) relating to criteria for identifying the least developed countries, one must at all costs avoid politicizing the debate, and specific economic and social indicators should be retained as the basis for including countries in the list of least developed countries or for graduating them from it. Similar criteria should, in fact, be defined for including countries in other categories, and political considerations should not be the determining factor.

7. Mr. AVRAMOV (Bulgaria) said that he considered the outcome of the latest session of the Economic and Social Council to be very positive, a confirmation of the tendency towards a constructive dialogue among member States on the most pressing issues of international economic cooperation. The Council had sought to break with routine and concentrate on several of the most urgent issues, in compliance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 45/264. It was encouraging to note that so many ministers and so many administrative heads of specialized agencies had attended the Special High-level Meeting, which had been the great innovation of the session. The major policy theme selected directly affected Bulgaria, which could only reiterate the position its delegation had taken at the Meeting, namely, that the integration of the economies of Eastern European countries would help to accelerate world economic development. Bulgaria in no way expected that the assistance granted to it to enable it to carry through the extremely long and painful process of transition it was currently undertaking should be to the detriment of the developing countries.

8. As a number of speakers had pointed out, the process of restructuring the economic and social sectors of the United Nations should not be restricted to administrative and organizational aspects but should also seek to improve the efficiency and authoritativeness of its organs, especially the Economic and Social Council. Improved coordination between the United Nations and the specialized agencies, which would allow the entire system to function more smoothly, was a key element in that process.

9. Within that general context, regional and interregional cooperation was expected to play a new role. In Europe, the process had already been well defined by the Economic Commission for Europe, and Bulgaria, aware of the Commission's importance in European cooperation, hoped to participate in its future work. The new priorities in the programme of work of the Commission, namely, environmental protection and the development of economic cooperation in the fields of transport and statistics, fully corresponded to Bulgaria's interests. In its view, the Commission's future success would depend on the changes it made in its structure and methods of work, and its success in those areas would determine its place in the development of cooperation in Europe. It must also coordinate with other international organizations like the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the General

(Mr. Avramov, Bulgaria)

Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Bulgaria was firmly convinced that technical cooperation for development could be a very important factor in world economic growth, and the United Nations system for technical cooperation was currently capable of playing a greater role in the life of the international community.

10. Mrs. FREUDENSCHUSS-REICH (Austria) said that since the high-level meeting on the item at the Economic and Social Council's summer session, the economic and social repercussions of the reforms under way in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union had become even more evident. Given her country's proximity and historical ties to some of those countries, it was aware of the need to provide them with economic and political support in order to promote stable and balanced development and thus contribute to their integration in the European and world economy. Her country had already committed to them a total of 15 billion schillings in aid which, based on the calculations of the Commission of the European Community, represented roughly 4 per cent of the total for international assistance, or four times the regular share based on each country's GNP.

11. Moreover, as a member of IMF and the World Bank, her country actively participated in the establishment of macroeconomic adjustment and stabilization programmes in the Eastern European countries and was one of the founding members of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. It also contributed to the industrial development fund established for Yugoslavia by the European Free Trade Association and had made a substantial contribution to the regional environment centre at Budapest.

12. That assistance did not reduce her country's aid to developing countries which, calculated as a percentage of GNP, had increased slightly in 1990. Her country had also announced its intention further to improve significantly the composition, volume and quality of its official development assistance to developing countries.

13. While her delegation welcomed the changes in the Council's methods of work and, in particular, the introduction of the high-level meeting held during the summer session, it agreed with the President of the Council that the meeting had not been a perfect model with respect to the organization of its work, although her delegation believed that the informal exchanges of views had been very useful. In the future the Council should endeavour to rationalize its work even further in order to enhance its quality, in particular, by strictly adhering to the agreed upon time-limits for interventions. Representatives should avoid digressions, make short oral presentations and raise specific questions, and longer and more convoluted statements could be circulated in advance, accompanied by summaries to facilitate their consideration.

14. Turning to the question of combatting AIDS, she said that the figures cited by the representative of WHO on the scope of the AIDS pandemic were very

(Mrs. Freudenschuss-Reich, Austria)

alarming. They demonstrated clearly that it was a global problem requiring global action and that it went beyond the health sector, affecting the social and economic spheres as well. That was why her delegation had introduced resolution 1991/66 on prevention and control of AIDS at the second regular session of the Council and was working on a text on the subject to be submitted to the Committee.

15. As a member of the WHO Management Committee on AIDS, her country endorsed the leadership role of the WHO Global Programme on AIDS (GPA) and fully supported its priorities, in particular, the strengthening of national programmes, the improvement of prevention and the campaign to combat discrimination against people with HIV and AIDS. Legislation in her country focused on preventive measures, respect for the human rights of people with HIV and AIDS and information campaigns, all of which were coordinated by public health services with the assistance of private organizations.

16. The scope of the scourge, which could affect 30 to 40 million people by the year 2000, was so great that all members of the international community must combine their efforts to conquer it.

17. Mr. WIBISONO (Indonesia) supported the positions of the Group of 77 expressed by its Chairman, the representative of Ghana. The past year had seen such rapid changes that they could be described as truly traumatic. The United Nations must adapt to those rapid changes, and initial steps had been taken to enhance the functioning of the Council, the efficacy of which had been called into question, in order to enable it to address the continuing crisis in development, the deepening impoverishment of the developing countries and the widening gap between them and the developed countries. Several General Assembly resolutions (in particular, resolutions 45/177 and 45/264) were encouraging in that regard. The Council must reassert its role and function with respect to the economic and social activities of the United Nations. The introduction of the high-level meeting at the summer session constituted a major innovation. At its most recent session, the Council had analysed the impact of the recent evolution in East-West relations on the growth of the world economy, in particular on the economic growth and development of the developing countries, as well as on international economic cooperation. The meeting could have been structured more efficiently and greater emphasis could have been placed on dialogue and deliberation, rather than on a succession of traditional speeches. Consideration should be given to adopting a set of ministerial recommendations at the end of future high-level meetings.

18. The new evaluation of the severity of the economic decline in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union did not augur well for the developing countries, for whom the likelihood of gaining new market and trading opportunities with the countries of Eastern Europe was decreasing. Moreover, the financial needs of those countries might substantially outstrip available resources. He was therefore pleased with the reassurances given by donor countries to the effect

(Mr. Wibisono, Indonesia)

that funding for the recovery of Eastern Europe would not be at the expense of the developing countries. His delegation considered that a new allocation of SDRs would be needed in the near term and that it would be necessary to tap into the "peace dividend" over the long term. As the Secretary-General had suggested, an international conference on development financing should be convened.

19. The resolutions of the Council and the General Assembly on the revitalization and restructuring of the Council responded to an incontestable need, namely, to enhance the efficiency of the United Nations in order to alleviate the plight of the developing countries. The fact that an increasing number of people were sinking daily into hopelessness and absolute poverty was extremely serious. There was reason to hope, however, that the renaissance of the Organization, already evident in the political sphere, would also be extended to the economic and social fields. While the Council should be able to exercise its role as a principal organ of the United Nations in those fields, its restructuring alone would not guarantee success unless Member States agreed to make effective use of intergovernmental machinery.

20. It was also imperative to strengthen multilateral cooperation in international economic affairs. Indeed, the globalization of the world economy and the growing interdependence of States were such that States could not achieve their national objectives alone. In that regard, the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, in particular the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries, adopted by the General Assembly at its eighteenth special session and the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade were important instruments of multilateral cooperation.

21. With respect to the capacity of the United Nations to respond to emergency situations arising from natural or man-made disasters, there was a pressing need to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the existing machinery, since the disasters, and the emergency situations to which they gave rise, were so diverse.

22. Mr. ABOLHASSANI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that global economic growth was lagging behind population growth and that some developing countries were experiencing zero or even negative economic growth. A major international and national effort was thus urgently needed. The developing countries were undergoing profound changes and, to attract financial flows, many had liberalized their investment policies and shifted their development strategies towards the exterior. In an attempt to increase resources, some had reduced their expenses, including subsidies. The international community, in particular the developed countries, should respond to those efforts by providing resources and new technologies, on favourable terms, and by increasing access to their markets since without increased financial resources, the economic transformation in the South would be in jeopardy. In

(Mr. Abolhassani, Islamic Republic of Iran)

that regard, the convening of an international conference on development financing, as proposed by the Secretary-General, was of paramount importance.

23. While the first Special High-level Meeting of the Economic and Social Council, held in the summer of 1991, had not met all the expectations of the participants, it could serve as an example for future high-level meetings. With respect to the content, he welcomed the commitment of the developed countries and the multilateral financial institutions to ensure that their efforts to respond to the needs of the economies in transition would not be at the expense of their programmes of assistance to the developing countries.

24. The practices of the Zionist entity in Palestine and in the other occupied Arab territories were depriving the Palestinians of their basic rights, including their right to earn a living. The report of the Secretary-General on "Israeli land and water practices and policies in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab Territories" (A/46/263) indicated clearly that the Israeli authorities had adopted a series of measures which had resulted in the abrogation of the laws in force in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip before the Israeli occupation (para. 5). Those authorities had, moreover, imposed restrictions on agricultural expansion and the use of water by the Palestinian Arab inhabitants, thereby reducing the area of Arab land under irrigitation, while irrigated areas in the Israeli settlements had been increased (para. 2). He cited several other passages from the same report on the same issue (paras. 34 and 43). While appreciating fully the efforts of various United Nations agencies to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people, he believed that that assistance, as necessary as it was, should not lead the international community to shirk its responsibility, which was to eliminate the root cause of the crisis, namely, the occupation. It was to be hoped that the resolution to be adopted by the Committee would include concrete measures to be taken and that those measures would be adopted by the General Assembly.

25. Ms. STOKES (New Zealand) said that the world-wide transitions and revolutionary changes were the principal themes of the forty-sixth session. A new generation of global problems such as the connection between environment and development, drug abuse, and crime had been added to issues which remained priority topics, such as poverty, disease and hunger in the developing world and the debt and economic recovery. The Economic and Social Council had, therefore, to transform itself into a coordinated and responsive forum for global dialogue and effective international action. Her country endorsed such a revitalization and was ready to cooperate in action which would build on the measures referred to in resolution 45/264.

26. The first Special High-level Meeting of the Council had dealt with the repercussions of the changes in Eastern Europe, which had opened up a new era of cooperation by means of which the region would be gradually integrated into the international economy. New Zealand wished to play a role in that process

(Ms. Stokes, New Zealand)

and intended to expand its contacts with Central Europe. It would continue to contribute to the technical assistance programmes of the Group of Twenty-four and to the work of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). It was undeniable that the needs of the developing countries, in particular the least developed countries (LDCs), remained urgent and that external assistance should at least be maintained at its current level.

27. In order to strengthen economic recovery in the industrial and the developing worlds, it was vital to respect the commitment made during the Uruguay multilateral trade negotiations to put an end to protectionism. The Commonwealth Ministers of Finance, at a recent meeting in Kuala Lumpur, had stressed that those negotiations should lead rapidly to a significant and balanced outcome, particularly with respect to trade barriers and distortions in the markets for agricultural products. It was time for the GATT negotiators to take some decisions.

28. The International Conference on Population and Development was to take place in 1994. Before then, subjects such as the relationship between population, development and environment, between population and the status of women and between population growth and ageing would be studied by groups of experts. Population growth was a major obstacle to sustainable development, and any proper consideration of development needs would have to address the issue of population. The preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) had highlighted the relationship between population pressure, unsustainable consumption patterns, lack of economic growth and environmental degradation. New Zealand would continue to support the work of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and other international population organizations, and the problem was an important element in its bilateral assistance to the South Pacific countries. Rapid population growth in the region coupled with low economic growth had meant static or declining per capita income. For cultural and religious reasons, family planning was a highly sensitive issue, and multilateral organizations, in particular UNFPA and IPPF, were best placed to provide advice and assistance to Governments in the region, often in association with local non-governmental organizations.

29. Regarding HIV infection, she welcomed the successful cooperation and collaboration within the United Nations system in combating the rapid spread of AIDS.

30. The Committee for Development Planning set forth in chapter V of its report criteria for identifying least developed countries. It was important to maintain the objectivity and integrity of the Committee's research. Dismantling parts of its proposals or adding new categories to accommodate particular countries would undermine the very concept of least developed countries. New Zealand's own official development assistance (ODA) programme would continue to focus on the developing countries of the South Pacific, including a number with least developed country status. New Zealand

(Ms. Stokes, New Zealand)

recognized that some countries, although not meeting the criteria for least developed countries, might face short-term problems; an example was Namibia, to which New Zealand had provided special assistance.

31. New Zealand wished to express its continued support for the work of the Statistical Commission, assisted by the Statistical Office of the United Nations and the statistical divisions of the regional commissions and the statistical units of the specialized agencies. The Commission, which was responsible for developing international standards, international statistical services and official statistics in member countries and coordinating the statistical work of United Nations organs, was one of the more successful of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council. New Zealand, for example, which lacked resources for its own official statistical agency, relied on the United Nations system of national accounts to measure its gross domestic product and other macro-economic variables, as did many other countries in the same situation.

32. Mr. GOMEZ (United Nations Development Programme) said that, although the AIDS epidemic had been visible for over 10 years, people were only now beginning to understand all its ramifications. It was an epidemic that spread with alarming rapidity and was different from other diseases: the incubation period averaged 10 years in the developed countries, possibly less in the developing countries, the majority of those infected were adult men and women in their economically most productive years, the associated diseases, such as tuberculosis, were now a serious problem in most affected communities, and a person once infected was infectious for life, often without knowing it.

33. The epidemic continued to gain ground, encouraged by seasonal labour, civil unrest, warfare and poverty. That meant the rethinking of approaches to development assistance, for in certain countries AIDS would use up private and public savings while the Government faced increasing demands for housing, social security and food subsidies and productivity was reduced through illness and death. Everything must be done to minimize the personal, social and economic costs of the epidemic by effective prevention programmes.

34. In 1987, recognizing that the epidemic was more than a health issue, WHO and UNDP had entered into the WHO/UNDP Alliance to Combat AIDS, under which UNDP had contributed more than $30 million to the WHO Global Programme on AIDS. Account must be taken of the multitude of ways in which the epidemic had changed the lives of people all over the world, because it was only by understanding the human impact of the disease that the urgent and compelling needs it had created could be tackled. That implied a whole range of programmes from prevention to treatment and support for those surviving after the death of a family member.

35. At its June 1991 session the UNDP Governing Council ates had adopted a policy framework for its response to the HIV epidemic which complemented the WHO/UNDP Alliance, specifying the role of UNDP and the United Nations. WHO

(Mr. Gomez, UNDP)

had actively participated in the development of the policy framework. The extent of the epidemic's developmental dimensions demanded a comprehensive and interdisciplinary response from the world community. Governments and non-governmental organizations were increasingly calling on UNDP to help them respond in a comprehensive and integrated manner. A training programme was being prepared.

36. In conclusion, he emphasized three related aspects of the AIDS problem. First, UNDP attached great importance to the global leadership provided by WHO. Secondly, while General Assembly resolution 44/211 called for the execution of technical assistance projects by Governments, in the context of AIDS prevention there were certain particular problems which UNDP would examine carefully, and if necessary provide special procedures for dealing with them. Lastly, the dramatic spread of AIDS and its devastating implications for economic and social development in developing countries clearly showed the need for additional human and financial resources.

37. Mr. KABIR (Bangladesh) observed that General Assembly resolution 45/264 had introduced significant changes in the work of the Economic and Social Council, which should be transformed into a more dynamic instrument, in view of the wide-ranging development crisis that confronted the majority of developing countries. The broad parameters of multilateral cooperation had been identified in the Declaration adopted by the General Assembly at its eighteenth special session and in the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1990s for the Least Developed Countries. The success of those instruments would, however, depend on the readiness of the international community to take specific initiatives and to spur action on a wide front. The Council, its subsidiary bodies and the General Assembly were all uniquely placed to make contributions in that regard. The high-level debate during the Council's summer session, introduced by resolution 45/264, should enable Member States to identify critical areas for collective action and to improve mechanisms for the coordinated follow-up and implementation of the various decisions. Bangladesh would actively participate in the discussions during the current session on the relationship between the work of the Council and that of its subsidiary bodies. It was important not to undermine the main goals for which individual subsidiary bodies had been created. At the same time, the activities of those bodies should not be confined to a limited number of areas.

38. The Council's continuing work on development finance, the external indebtedness of developing countries and other important issues had been the subject of lengthy discussions during its summer session, and various ways and means had been suggested to put an end to the pressures currently being felt on the international economic scene. The idea of an international conference on development financing had also been suggested by the Secretary-General and supported by the Group of 77. Several important recommendations had also been made during the summer session of the Council on the various international conferences planned. Bangladesh attached great importance to the

(Mr. Kabir, Bangladesh)

International Conference on Population and Development and hoped that its organizational details could be worked out during the current session of the General Assembly.

39. The Council had also discussed the need for timely and adequate humanitarian assistance in the event of disasters, including natural disasters, and several interesting proposals had been floated. As one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world, Bangladesh had an abiding interest in promoting agreement on all constructive suggestions which could strengthen the capacity of the international community to cope with such disasters.

40. Finally, the new criteria recommended by the Committee for Development Planning for identifying the least developed countries and revising the list of countries should be more comprehensive and more suited to assessing the fundamental structural handicaps of the least developed countries. Moreover, care should be taken to base all actions pursuant to those criteria on adequate statistical evidence and on an objective evaluation of the situation in individual countries and of their vulnerabilities. The graduation rules should also take into account the needs of each country at a precise point in time before a decision was made to remove a country from the list. An analysis should also be made of the resource implications of the application of the United Nations criteria, including additional steps to help the countries in that group in the areas of debt relief and external trade.

41. Mr. LEGWAILA (Botswana) said that Botswana was willing to host the Preparatory Committee of the Conference on Development and Population.

42. The views of the Group of 77 had already been presented by the representative of Ghana and he would therefore limit his comments to Chapter V of the report of the Committee for Development Planning.

43. The proposed new criteria for identifying the least developed countries did not take into account the situation of ccuntries whose earnings were derived not from production but mainly from the sale of assets. Gross domestic product was an indicator that distorted such situations while per capita net domestic product, which took into account the depreciation and depletion of natural resources, would reflect reality much more accurately. In the view of his delegation, due weight should also be given to the economic diversification index. Botswana was highly dependent on revenues from the mineral sector, especially diamonds, the prices of which it did not control. In 1988/1989, diamonds accounted for 77 per cent of export earnings and over 50 per cent of government revenues, while the share of manufacturing stood at only 4.2 per cent of GDP. Economic diversification was therefore at a very low level as reflected in the share of manufactured products in the import bill. The relative weight of the three elements of the proposed criteria varied from country to country. The graduation rules should therefore only apply when a country satisfied all three criteria.

(Mr. Legwaila, Botswana)

44. The national development plans of the developing countries were adopted with definite assumptions concerning the level of available resources, which was essential if external assistance was to be used efficiently. Botswana had made the assumption in its seventh national development plan that external assistance would remain at current levels. If Botswana were to be graduated now, that level of external assistance would not be forthcoming and there would be a major disruption of development programmes. It would therefore be appropriate to give countries due for graduation a grace period of at least five years so that they could take that factor into account in their development plans and ensure that development momentum was sustained.

45. Mr. SEZAKI (Japan) said that in several instances at the second regular session of 1991 of the Economic and Social Council, steps had been taken to make discussions less formal but more relevant and productive, in particular during the Special High-level Meeting on the impact of the recent evolution of East-West relations on the growth of the world economy. The discussions on the report of the South Commission and on the economic, social and environmental consequences of the situation between Iraq and Kuwait, as well as the exchange of views on strengthening multilateral economic cooperation, had also been fruitful. The dialogue with the Executive Secretaries of the regional commissions and with the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, now firmly established, had deepened mutual understanding between Member States and the organs and agencies responsible for development and international financial matters. The use of the Chairman's summary and the decision to amalgamate certain agenda items and examine them only once every two years had saved the Council considerable time.

46. Nevertheless, the reform process should be continued. In particular, the schedules agreed upon for restructuring the subsidiary bodies should be observed and consultations on the matter should commence without delay. The Council should try to reduce its workload. At its organizational session for 1992, it should take up one or more major general policy themes for the Special High-level Meeting, and it was important to strike a balance between social and economic issues.

47. His delegation had participated in the discussions of the Commission on Transnational Corporations. While appreciating the significance of the work of the Commission and that of the Centre on Transnational Corporations, it was convinced that those bodies did not have the requisite expertise to continue dealing with questions such as foreign debt and the environment, which should be addressed in other forums. Furthermore, the discussion on the code of conduct for transnational corporations did not take into account the current reality of the world economy. Developing countries now regarded direct investment and the activities of transnational corporations as essential to their development, and his delegation accordingly welcomed the decision to postpone negotiations on the code.

(Mr. Sezaki, Japan)

48. The General Assembly was due at its forty-sixth session to decide on the new criteria for inclusion in the list of least developed countries. That was an important decision which would have an impact on Japan's aid policy. It was most important that the decision reached should not be viewed as arbitrary, since that might damage the credibility of the category.

49. The Secretary-General had proposed convening an international conference on development financing. Although that was an important issue, it had already been discussed, in particular at the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly, at the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and in the International Development Strategy. It was also dealt with regularly by the IMF and World Bank. Moreover, it was on the agenda for the next session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. It did not therefore seem necessary to devote an international conference to the issue.

50. Lastly, his delegation welcomed the fact that the Council had decided on the objectives of the 1994 Conference on Population and Development, as well as on its preparatory process. The Conference should contribute to the advancement of the activities of United Nations bodies in relation to population, particularly in developing countries.

51. Miss HASSAN (Egypt) said that significant changes had been introduced at the second regular session of 1991 of the Economic and Social Council which were the first indication of success in the endeavours to revitalize the Council and were an important step forward in the United Nations reform process. The Special High-level Meeting on the impact of the recent evolution of East-West relations on the growth of the world economy had been particularly well attended. Both the level of representation and the intensity of the discussions reflected the magnitude of the issue and had led to a stimulating debate. Being the first of its kind, it had not been a perfect model of organization, but the experience acquired during it should be useful for future meetings of that kind.

52. The mechanism for the informal exchange of views, conceived in the context of the revitalization of the Council, had facilitated interaction between delegations and with the Executive Secretaries of the regional commissions and the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund. Her delegation hoped that that kind of consultation would continue and would be extended to the World Bank.

53. The discussions had emphasized the need to revitalize growth and development in developing countries and had shown that development finance, both concessional and non-concessional, was a crucial element in achieving that goal. Her delegation therefore welcomed the proposal of the Secretary-General to convene an international conference on development finance and hoped that the modalities for holding it would be decided on at the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

(Miss Hassan, Egypt)

54. Given the importance of population issues for sustained development, she welcomed the Council's adoption of a resolution convening an international conference on population and development. Her delegation would play an active role in the preparations for the Conference, which would contribute to the promotion of the population activities of United Nations agencies in the developing countries.

55. No task was nobler than that of saving lives and helping people in danger. The international community should therefore devote its full attention to the question of emergency humanitarian assistance. Her delegation had taken part in the preliminary discussions on the matter in Geneva, and regretted that they had failed to produce concrete results. Since a country's level of development directly affected its level of preparedness to respond to natural disasters, the vital need to step up action in the economic and social spheres could not be overemphasized.

56. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 45/264, a timetable had been drawn up detailing the stages of the reform process. Her delegation would also play an active part in the work relating to the restructuring of subsidiary bodies.

57. Mr. GISLASON (Iceland), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, expressed grave concern at the rapid spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The figure of 8 to 10 million HIV-infected people provided by the World Health Organization (WHO) was undoubtedly a conservative estimate. Today everybody realized that the virus knew no national borders and that is was affecting all sectors of the population and not only so-called "high-risk groups". Precautions were therefore necessary, and information campaigns were of vital importance in that connection. In view of the way in which the virus was transmitted, it was pointless to discriminate against HIV-infected people. Otherwise, those who suspected that they were infected would reject voluntary tests and continue to spread the virus to others. Restrictions on travel and immigration in respect of HIV-infected people were also unjustified, and such human rights violations should be ended immediately in those countries where they existed.

58. AIDS was not only a health issue but also a development issue; it should therefore not be left solely to health authorities, but should also be the concern of planning and finance authorities. The pandemic hit adults in their most productive years. Agricultural and industrial productivity losses, together with a decline in human resources and skilled manpower, would be the result. Furthermore, since the developing countries did not have the financial resources to hospitalize all those affected, women would bear the heaviest burden, which would divert time from their other important tasks.

59. It was therefore vital to coordinate preventive action by all the organizations in the United Nations system. While WHO should continue to have the leading role, other agencies such as UNICEF and UNDP and, in particular,

(Mr. Gislason, Iceland)

the World Bank, should also be involved, and their responsibilities must be clearly defined in the light of the fields where they had comparative advantages.

60. The HIV/AIDS issue must be given high priority. The Nordic countries would continue to provide multilateral and bilateral aid, but their aid would represent only a small part of what was needed. All donors should participate in the effort.

61. Although the subject was difficult to discuss because of its private nature and the moral and religious taboos surrounding it, there was no alternative to open and frank discussion of the issue. It was in the interest of future generations that the subject should be kept on the agenda of the General Assembly.

62. Mrs. AMARASEKERE (Sri Lanka) said that the question of human settlements would assume particular importance in the coming decade, especially in connection with the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. She commended the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) for its strong leadership and its efforts at national and international levels.

63. Human settlements issues had become increasingly complex. Despite considerable progress in developing strategies and policies, as well as technical cooperation, the outlook world wide remained discouraging. According to current estimates, nearly 1 billion people were without shelter and the developing countries would have to plan for shelter for an additional 1 billion people. Moreover, the prospect of urbanization of poverty loomed large, while the importance of investment in human settlements for socio-economic growth, human development and protection of the environment had not yet been recognized. However, the debate on sustainable development and the environment had highlighted the importance of national and international long-term action. Her delegation welcomed the consensus achieved by the Commission on Human Settlements at its thirteenth session, and hoped that the General Assembly would adopt Commission resolution 13/2.

64. Nearly 20 years after the Vancouver Conference, it was time to convene another international forum to discuss human settlements issues again, in the form of a United Nations conference, possibly to be held in 1997. Such a conference would offer an opportunity to review the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000, and to discuss the relevant conclusions of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, which was to be held in 1992.

65. She welcomed the Secretary-General's proposal to convene an international conference on development financing. The restructuring of the United Nations intergovernmental machinery in the economic and social sectors must be preceded by careful consideration of the issues involved.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
16th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 16 October 1991
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 16th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. BURKE (Ireland)

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AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued) (A/46/3, A/46/19, A/46/163, A/46/132-E/1991/58, A/46/171-E/1991/61, A/46/204-E/1991/80 and Add.1 and 2, A/46/263-E/1991/88, A/46/288, A/46/467, A/46/477, A/46/493, A/46/520; A/C.2/46/2, A/C.2/46/5; A/C.2/46/L.8 and Corr.1, L.10 and L.12; E/1991/32)

1. Mr. GONZALEZ (Chile) said that the ending of ideological confrontation in international relations should result in an ending of economic and trade conflicts. His delegation therefore looked forward to the success of the Uruguay Round and to the convening of an international conference on development financing.

2. His delegation had welcomed the recent initiatives to revitalize the Economic and Social Council and restructure the subsidiary bodies of both the Council and the General Assembly. It was time to speed up the process of evaluating the work of those bodies by taking steps to abolish or reform those that were notoriously inadequate or obsolete. The restructuring process should enable the subsidiary bodies to perform efficiently and meet the needs of the new international environment.

3. He commended the excellent synthesis contained in the foreword of the report of the Economic and Social Council (A/46/3). Economic and social issues were of paramount importance, and recent events had shown that peace and security did not depend exclusively on political will; a mechanism was required to ensure that all countries attained levels of development that enabled them to reduce the social pressures that jeopardized their very existence.

4. The developing countries had clearly demonstrated their firm resolve to adopt democratic systems, defend human rights, undertake economic adjustment measures, curtail government spending, introduce administrative austerity measures, open their markets and service their debts. Such measures had led to the overall impoverishment of those countries, with devastating consequences for the most underprivileged segments of the population. It was high time that the international community realized that the developing countries' political systems could not continue to withstand the pressures arising from their social debt to large segments of their populations, a debt that continued to grow at an alarming rate.

5. Mr. MUCHANGA (Zambia) said that, while the Special High-level Meeting of the Economic and Social Council had apparently reached a consensus on the notion that international cooperation in the interrelated areas of trade, money, finance, technology and development could ensure equitable and sustainable development, that consensus seemed to have been lost as ad hoc, short-term and politically expedient measures were adopted for the management of the international economy. The Economic and Social Council's discussion on strengthening multilateral cooperation in international economic affairs had

(Mr. Muchanga, Zambia)

failed to establish common ground on the central issue of a new international economic order to replace the defunct order created by the Bretton Woods agreements.

6. It should be possible within the framework of the step-by-step approach to the restructuring of the United Nations in the economic and social sectors which had been agreed at the resumed forty-fifth session of the General Assembly to find a satisfactory solution to the question of equitable geographical representation and, in particular, the problem of Africa's under-representation on the Economic and Social Council.

7. The Council's adoption of important resolutions such as those on assistance to the Palestinian people and the activities of transnational corporations in South Africa reflected the international community's need, given the current welcome emphasis on democracy and human rights, to reaffirm its support for the Palestinian and South African peoples on key economic issues affecting their struggles for democracy.

8. His delegation hoped that the recommendation of the Committee for Development Planning on new criteria to be used in identifying least developed countries would not present problems for other delegations.

9. Mr. HALLAK (Syrian Arab Republic) drew attention to the report by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) on Israeli land and water practices and policies in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories (A/46/263-E/1991/88, annex), which clearly showed that economic conditions and living standards in those territories had severely declined as a result of Israeli policies and practices there. Israeli settlement policies had also had critical economic and social consequences for the Arab inhabitants and their potential for development. A study by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) on economic development in the area had confirmed those negative effects, which it attributed to the reduction in cultivated farm land. Moreover, the 1990 report of the International Labour Organisation on employment in the occupied territories had noted a decline in agricultural employment caused by land losses, insufficient water resources and the inability of Palestinian farmers to compete domestically, either because of Israeli-subsidized imports or because of obstacles imposed on agricultural equipment purchases and the sale of produce abroad.

10. In the occupied Golan, Syrian farmers had been unable to plant fruit-bearing trees, and their only marketable commodity - apples - was now subject to restrictions imposed by Israel. Furthermore, Israeli settlements, factories and research centres had been built on agricultural land. Israel was intent upon evicting Arabs from their land and seizing control of their natural resources, which it then used in furthering its expansionist aims.

(Mr. Hallak, Syrian Arab Republic)

11. Israeli policies in the occupied territories, including the settlement of new immigrants, which was altering the demographic character of the area, were in flagrant violation of the fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949, international law, the Charter and resolutions of the United Nations, and most notably the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States. He therefore wished to draw attention to the right of the Arab people in the Golan and the other occupied Arab territories to full sovereignty over all their natural resources and to full compensation for the loss and damages suffered in that respect.

12. Mr. AL-KAHTANY (Saudi Arabia) said that, according to the report prepared by ESCWA (A/46/263-E/1991/88, annex), Israel had gained total control over the land and water resources of the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories. Israel continued to pursue its settlement policies in those territories in order to create a completely integrated, economic, agricultural and industrial base that consolidated the Israeli economy at the expense of the Palestinian national economy and the rights of Arabs in their own lands. The Israeli authorities had confiscated much of the land in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and the Syrian Arab Golan Heights and had imposed restrictions on the use of water there. Israel continued to restrict Palestinian agricultural activities and fishing, impose restrictions on the movement of Palestinian workers, freeze bank accounts and confiscate identity cards and properties with the objective of driving the Palestinian Arab people from its land.

13. His delegation was encouraged by the assistance provided to the Palestinian people, both financially and in kind, by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other international organizations. While such assistance was incommensurate with the scope of the Palestinian tragedy, it undoubtedly helped to alleviate the burden of occupation. Saudi Arabia would continue to support the implementation of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly, which would enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights and live in peace in a land of peace.

14. Mr. GUERRERO (Philippines) said that the Economic and Social Council had taken determined steps towards self-revitalization at its second regular session of 1991. For the first time, the Council had opened its session with a three-day segment attended by high-level decision makers from Member States who had assessed the impact of improved East-West relations on the growth of the world economy, particularly the growth and development of developing countries. While the integration of the Central and Eastern European countries into the free-market systems of the world was a welcome development, many developing countries were concerned that they might, as a consequence, receive less attention from developed countries.

(Mr. Guerrero, Philippines)

15. For the first time, Council members had held informal exchanges of views on significant topics with the Executive Secretaries of the regional commissions and with the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The Council had sought to understand the linkages between economic and social problems and to identify and strengthen modalities of implementation. Developed countries must fulfil their commitments, and developing countries must seek to ensure that the commitments, made on their behalf were implemented.

16. In reviewing the report of the Economic and Social Council, the Second Committee should consider ways of revitalizing the Council in the areas of organization and coordination. The Council should not duplicate the work of other bodies but should inspire them to accomplish their specific mandates in order to achieve the goal of universal peace through economic growth and development. His delegation commended the Council's emphasis on human development and its recognition that human beings were the goal of, and not just the means to, development.

17. Mr. BABA (Uganda) said that the relentless spread of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) and the absence of any cure or vaccine for the disease posed a serious threat to humanity. The disease was exacting a heavy toll on the societies of many countries, with severe consequences for their development prospects. The AIDS problem demanded an effective and coordinated response from Governments and public health authorities to heighten awareness of its development implications. The epidemic could only be combated through new expertise, programmes and institutional arrangements, all of which necessitated considerable additional resources.

18. While no systematic study had yet been undertaken, it was clear that the disease had profound development implications for Uganda. The decimation of the human capital, particularly that constituted by the educated elite, of Uganda and other countries in sub-Saharan Africa would make overall development efforts more difficult and costly. The AIDS epidemic would lead to an acceleration of poverty by reducing the labour supply and making the poor more vulnerable to starvation and other economic hardships. Those hardships were particularly severe for families with affected members, owing to the high cost of treatment and the loss of time spent attending to the sick, with consequent adverse effects on food production at the household level. In addition, the increasing number of orphans caused by the disease was stretching traditional systems of extended family care to the breaking point, and communities were becoming less willing to accept the children of deceased relatives.

19. In view of those tragic developments, considerable efforts at the national level and substantial support from the international community were required. In particular, a systematic analysis should be made of the impact of the AIDS epidemic on the economic and social fabric of society. The findings would provide the basis for a national plan to combat the disease through a comprehensive and multisectoral approach.

(Mr. Baba, Uganda)

20. Public awareness had formed the keystone of Uganda's strategy to combat the AIDS pandemic; the Ugandan Government had created a separate autonomous body, the Uganda AIDS Commission, to oversee, plan and coordinate AIDS prevention and control activities. The World Health Organization (WHO) and other United Nations agencies had played a central coordinating role in the Ugandan AIDS programme. The United Nations system had demonstrated its resolve to fight the AIDS pandemic, and specific and effective plans of action analogous to those employed in the successful campaign to eradicate smallpox, were now urgently required. In the past, valuable time had been wasted seeking scapegoats for the origin of AIDS and using the disease to perpetuate racial prejudices. However, AIDS was a global problem and should not be exploited to put in place discriminatory measures at either the national or the international level: instead, it should be addressed in an effective manner that respected human dignity.

21. Mr. MISSARY (Yemen) said he hoped that the Committee's deliberations would reflect the international community's wish to find a fair and comprehensive settlement to the Palestinian issue on the basis of the United States initiative to hold a Middle East peace conference. Yemen felt strongly that the sovereignty of the Palestinian people over its natural and economic resources and its right to independence and self-determination should be guaranteed under the leadership of its sole legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and his delegation hoped that a draft resolution would be submitted which reflected those views while placing additional emphasis on the need for international aid.

22. His delegation endorsed the statement made by the representative of Bangladesh regarding the criteria for identifying the least developed countries. Such criteria, which should be objectively applied, should furnish a clear and precise picture of the real situation in such countries. In the case of Yemen, the data available to the Committee for Development Planning no longer reflected the current situation in the country. The biggest obstacles currently facing the country were the frailty of its economic and social structures and the difficulties engendered by the recent merging of the two Yemens. Huge financial burdens had been created by the Gulf crisis, not least by the enforced repatriation of some 1 million Yemenis. Yemen's total debt now equalled that of both countries previously, posing an enormous barrier to development. Finally, Yemen had suffered an earthquake and repeated flooding in the past decade. Long-term planning and international cooperation were clearly needed to overcome those major obstacles to development.

23. While welcoming the resolutions on natural disasters adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1991, his delegation hoped that the delivery of assistance would be enhanced to relieve the suffering of people in the disaster-stricken countries.

24. The relationship between democracy and development was close. Consequently, countries attempting to institute democracy should receive

(Mr. Missary, Yemen)

economic support in order to preclude events such as those which had recently occurred in Haiti.

25. Mr. AHMED (India) said that the report of the South Commission would significantly improve international development prospects and deserved the widest possible dissemination. It contained important observations on cooperation within the South itself, an area of activity to which the United Nations system should devote greater financial and technical support.

26. While the final outcome of the recent developments in East-West relations was unclear, it was evident that those changes had great potential to benefit the world as a whole. However, that benefit could only be maximized through the full integration of marginalized countries into the world economic system. The developing countries had hoped that reduced hostility between East and West would make possible the redirection of resources to address the challenges of impoverishment and deprivation. Those hopes remained unfulfilled, and the marginalization of the developing world continued unabated. It was essential that the South should be more substantially involved in what was perceived as essentially an East-West dialogue.

27. In view of the new prospects for international cooperation, India welcomed the Secretary-General's recent proposal for the convening of an international conference on development financing. While the modalities of the conference required further study, States should make a political commitment to such a meeting as a necessary first stage in addressing North-South issues.

28. Adverse factors, such as an absence of political will and a lack of resources, had prevented certain subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council which were of particular concern to the developing countries from being truly effective. Corrective action was needed, and India therefore welcomed the provisions of General Assembly resolution 45/264.

29. While there was a need to enhance the capacity of the United Nations to respond to emergencies, India believed that outside intervention in a Member State on humanitarian grounds constituted an infringement of the State's national sovereignty and was fraught with serious implications. The need for enhanced administrative coordination should not result in a mandate which went beyond purely humanitarian efforts; any response by the United Nations should always be based on national consent and request. In general, India hoped that the Committee's deliberations on that topic would not stray into areas of political controversy and thereby render consensus difficult. The recent declaration by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Group of 77 (A/46/520, annex) contained useful guidelines in that area and should therefore be given careful consideration by the Committee.

30. The Gulf crisis had been a harsh reminder to oil-importing countries of the importance of assured supplies, stable prices and the need to develop renewable energy sources. The impact of the crisis had been particularly

(Mr. Ahmed, India)

severe on India, causing its imports to double in cost, reducing its traditional markets and leading to an abrupt drop in remittances from Indian workers in the Gulf region. Those adverse economic effects had been exacerbated by the cost of rehabilitating returnees from the Gulf. India had nevertheless upheld the sanctions imposed on Iraq, yet the results of its efforts to obtain compensation through the United Nations had been disappointing. Urgent steps were therefore needed to redress that situation, in accordance with Article 50 of the Charter.

31. Mr. SALAZAR (Colombia) said that the first fruits of the General Assembly's decision to restructure and revitalize the economic and social areas of the United Nations had been seen at the Special High-level Meeting of the Economic and Social Council, an event that had no recent precedent. Bringing together a large number of countries and specialized agencies, in addition to the 54 members of the Council, that forum had taken on a universal character which must be preserved at future high-level meetings.

32. Migration and refugees, which were among the most important problems facing the United Nations, were generally the consequences of underdevelopment. By laying the foundations for economic and social progress and creating the conditions for the full use of human resources in economically and socially backward regions, the United Nations would begin to find a solution to that problem, and consequently to the local wars, migrations and flows of refugees that were its sequels. Root causes must be addressed through a comprehensive and generous approach by Member States, in a spirit of solidarity. In that connection, his delegation welcomed the meeting of African Heads of State that was to be held in 1993 with a view to finding ways and means of overcoming that region's problems. It must be remembered, however, that the problem of underdevelopment had a global, and not merely African, dimension. Only through cooperation and universal solidarity could comprehensive solutions be found to the vicious cycle of underdevelopment and poverty.

33. Colombia was watching the political and economic process unfolding in Eastern Europe with interest. It was important to ensure that privatization and democratization did not give rise to new imbalances in the world. Massive financial resources and economic advice would be required to ensure the success of the processes under way, but that assistance must not be granted at the expense of the poorer and more needy developing countries, whose problems had not been solved. New solutions and new resources must be found with the same promptness, efficiency and solidarity that had characterized the response to the Gulf crisis.

34. Colombia supported the Secretary-General's proposal for the convening of an international conference on development financing. How to reconcile the most heavily indebted countries' inability to meet their obligations with the need to promote development was a political rather than an economic problem. What was required was political will to grant the resources, political

(Mr. Salazar, Colombia)

solidarity to give a helping hand to those in need of it, and political generosity to set aside old quarrels and prejudices.

35. Almost from its inception, the United Nations had insisted on the need for an international trade body to act as the third pillar of the international economic system, alongside the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Unfortunately, the Havana Charter establishing an international trade organization had remained a dead letter. Instead the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) had operated for years as an interim body, despite various proposals to give it a more permanent and institutionalized form. Now, in the light of the Uruguay Round, the need was felt for a system to implement the results of the Round, to settle any disputes that might arise, and to establish a solid institutional basis and corporate form for GATT, enabling it to cooperate with the other financial institutions in the search for a global economic policy. Acccordingly, his delegation believed that the time had come to give the idea of an international trade organization careful consideration.

36. Colombia was confident that the Uruguay Round would be brought to a successful conclusion, thereby avoiding a crisis in the multilateral trading system. The negotiations provided a unique opportunity for ensuring that the developing countries' commodities were not denied access to developed country markets and that the trading system was not dominated by unilateralism and bilateralism. Sacrifices would have to be made. Only through global solidarity could fairer and more equitable trade conditions for all be created. The next session of UNCTAD, to be held in his country in 1992, would provide a further opportunity to work towards greater justice in the fields of trade and development.

37. Mr. YEGOROV (Belarus) said that the Special High-level Meeting of the Economic and Social Council had led to a deeper understanding of the processes under way in the USSR and Eastern Europe and of their impact on world economic development. His delegation welcomed the support shown for the positive evolution of East-West relations and was convinced that that process would ultimately benefit not just the countries concerned, but the entire international community.

38. Economic and Social Council resolution 1991/93, on the International Conference on Population and Development, contained valuable provisions, particularly on the convening of expert group meetings to study major clusters of issues. The adoption by the Council of resolution 1991/55, concerning the work of the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations, would considerably enhance the contribution made by transnational business to international cooperation in the economic and environmental [illegible] was thus welcomed by Belarus.

39. The Council's resolution 1991/51, which dealt with the Chernobyl problem, provided a satisfactory basis for strengthened international cooperation in

(Mr. Yegorov, Belarus)

studying, mitigating and minimizing the consequences of the accident. Belarus hoped the General Assembly would adopt decisions at its current session to consolidate the results already achieved and to stimulate further progress in dealing with the severe national, regional and global consequences of the Chernobyl disaster.

40. Mr. ELIASHIV (Israel) thanked all delegations whose support had led to Israel's admission to the Economic Commission for Europe at the second 1991 regular session of the Economic and Social Council. That admission was the natural consequence of Israel's close economic relations with the States members of the Commission, ties which would now be further enhanced.

41. The fact that deep political differences between countries and groups of countries had not prevented them from discussing common economic and social problems in the Second Committee or from reaching an important measure of agreement was certainly encouraging. Unfortunately, however, some delegations had attempted to use that forum to advance their political ends by waging a campaign of relentless hostility against Israel. It was thus with regret and a sense of resignation that he was once again compelled, in the context of the sub-item on assistance to the Palestinian people, to set the record straight. Many delegations chose to forget that Israel was currently the only State directly and actively engaged in promoting the well-being, safety and socio-economic development of the Palestinian Arabs in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, and that in less than 25 years of Israeli administration those people had made spectacular progress in every field of life. Nevertheless, Israel continued firmly to oppose any form of assistance to or cooperation with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

42. Each year, consistent efforts were made to present Israel as systematically opposing and hindering the provision of international assistance to Palestinian Arabs. Nothing could be further from the truth. Israel not only welcomed any assistance that might be extended for constructive purposes through legitimate channels, but also cooperated fully with UNDP and other international organizations in implementing programmes approved on the basis of professional and non-political criteria aimed at improving the living conditions of those people. Owing to its limited resources, Israel was unable to solve the economic problems of the territories unaided; international support was thus essential and most appreciated. Israel had encouraged the participation and cooperation of international voluntary organizations and United Nations agencies in economic and social development projects in Judea, Samaria and Gaza. In that connection, he was pleased to note that, according to paragraph 28 of the Secretary-General's report (A/46/204-E/1991/80), the UNDP Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People had been expanded considerably.

43. Each year the Second Committee was presented with new reports recommending the identification of projects and the preparation of surveys ostensibly aimed at improving conditions in the Israeli-administered

(Mr. Eliashiv, Israel)

territories. Because of politically motivated pressure, United Nations organs competed to see who could do best in that unnecessary exercise to satisfy the demands of the PLO. Unfortunately, none of those organs was capable of financing the projects envisaged: UNDP, the main financial source for assistance projects, was unable to obtain even minimal funding for its already established programme. The money spent on futile surveys should thus be rechannelled towards UNDP projects of proven benefit to the population of the territories.

44. Israel had repeatedly emphasized the need for additional resources to meet the growing requirements of the Palestinian Arabs and would continue to encourage foreign Governments and international organizations to increase their efforts to improve the quality of life of those people. Legislation was currently being prepared to encourage capital investment in Judea, Samaria and Gaza; Israel also planned to reduce the tax burden on residents of the territories. If sufficient resources were allocated to projects to improve the living conditions of the Palestinian Arabs, Israel would fully cooperate in the implementation of such projects.

45. Obviously, material well-being was no substitute for a political settlement, and his delegation hoped that the current peace initiative would yield positive results. Israel had done its utmost to ensure the well-being of the population in the administered territories and would continue to do so until a political settlement was achieved.

46. Turning to the sub-item on permanent sovereignty over national resources in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories, he said that most of the source material used in compiling the ESCWA report contained in document A/46/263-E/1991/88 reflected the authors' lack of objectivity. The report contained misconceptions, misrepresentations and mistakes which could have been avoided had the authors chosen to utilize basic data published by Israel which were reliable and freely available. The report also failed to examine land holding and use, and made no attempt to describe trends in water consumption and its monitoring over the different periods covered. An evaluation of the comparative efficiency of irrigation over the last four decades or a comparison of crop yield and diversification over the same period would have been useful. Instead, the report focused on a mythical struggle over a fixed resource. A basic premise of that struggle was the tendentious claim that meaningful development had taken place in the territories in the years before the Arab countries had lost control over them in their 1967 war of aggression. The report presented an idyllic picture of a paradise lost in which the residents had enjoyed rising standards of living and the Government had undertaken strenuous development efforts.

47. The facts, however, did not bear that story out. Production per unit of land and water of field crops, orchard fruits and vegetables had doubled in the territories since 1967, when Israel had begun to administer the territories. Total agricultural output had increased dramatically as a result

(Mr. Eliashiv, Israel)

of capital accumulation, technical progress, and, most importantly, exposure to Israel's own highly developed agriculture through an open-borders policy. High-yield strains and high-income crops had been introduced, with the result that the contribution of agriculture to GDP had more than doubled between 1968 and 1987.

48. In addition, improved drilling and pumping installations had provided the Arab inhabitants with a more stable and regulated flow of water, which had been a major factor in the spectacular progress achieved in agriculture over the past two decades. The supply of drinking water had tripled in many Arab villages. Water no longer needed to be carried by hand from wells. When shortfalls occurred in the areas in question, they were supplied with water from Israeli sources.

49. In fulfilling its international responsibilities in the administration of the water resources in the territories, Israel had made every effort to respond to the needs of modern economic development while refraining from disturbing the existing economic infrastructure. Its policy and practice were aimed solely at the benefit of local residents and the development of agriculture. The truth was that untapped water resources in the areas were meagre. The rainy season was relatively short and only a small portion of that water could be captured for irrigation purposes. Wells and springs were not abundant, and became excessively saline if over-exploited.

50. Reports and resolutions containing provocative political elements would receive no support from Israel. On the eve of the convening of a regional peace conference, Israel was calling for direct negotiations with its neighbours and for the Palestinian problem to be resolved in the manner detailed by Israel's Deputy Prime Minister in his address to the General Assembly. Israel had also proposed the drafting of a joint programme for regional development involving international aid. Repetitious, politically motivated debates and resolutions could only prejudice ongoing efforts to advance peace in the Middle East. The parties involved in direct negotiations should be left to achieve constructive solutions to the issues under consideration.

51. Mr. IQBAL (Pakistan) said that, while the Special High-level Meeting of the Economic and Social Council had led to a better understanding of the nature and scope of the changes in East-West relations and their implications for the developing countries and international economic cooperation, it would have been more beneficial if it had produced a strategy for addressing the legitimate concerns of the developing countries in that regard.

52. His delegation welcomed the new wave of democracy and freedom in Central and Eastern Europe, but was distressed to note that the costs of the transition there now appeared higher than expected. Analysing the impact of the reforms on the developing countries, the Committee for Development Planning had predicted that the adjustment process might last several years,

(Mr. Iqbal, Pakistan)

with harmful consequences for third world countries. It was also disconcerting to note that there had been some derogations from the principle of additionality in the commitments of aid to Eastern European countries by the Development Assistance Committee. His delegation strongly agreed that the donor community must ensure continued official financial assistance to Eastern Europe was based on the principle of additionality, so as not to affect financial support for the developing countries adversely.

53. In an interdependent world, the marginalization of developing countries would have serious long-term effects on the entire international economy. Genuine integration of Eastern Europe in the world economy was bound to benefit the developing countries. In formulating their macroeconomic policies, the major industrialized countries, particularly those with major budgetary deficits, must promote savings in order to expand the world supply of capital. In that context, his delegation hoped that the new opportunities created by the breaking down of ideological barriers would benefit all countries of the world. Assurances were needed that a specific percentage of future purchases by donor countries to meet urgent Soviet food and consumer demands would be obtained from the developing countries. To that end, his delegation proposed that a triangular arrangement should be elaborated involving Soviet needs, Western credit and third world supplies.

54. His delegation was seriously concerned at Israeli land and water practices and policies in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories catalogued in the report prepared by ESCWA. Those policies had severely limited the economic and social opportunities of the Palestinian people and had created a state of conflict and competition over land and water resources. It was incumbent on the international community to ensure an end to such practices.

55. The International Conference on Population and Development would provide an appropriate forum in which to formulate a strategy for dealing with world population growth. In view of the inextricable linkage between population issues and development, the international community needed to consider the question in depth if global resources were to be preserved for generations to come. Pakistan fully supported the work done thus far to prepare for the Conference.

56. AIDS was not only a medical problem but had humanitarian, social and economic dimensions as well. Pakistan was appreciative of the work being done by WHO and UNICEF to fight the disease and agreed that future emphasis should be on prevention of the disease through popular awareness programmes.

57. It was of critical importance that increased resources should be made available to improve prospects for growth and development. Pakistan therefore fully supported the proposal to convene an international conference on development financing.

58. Mr. JINO (Solomon Islands) agreed that the proposed restructuring of the United Nations system in the economic and social fields would lead to effective coordination of the system's activities in those areas and render the Organization more responsive to the changing and evolving needs of Member States, in particular the developing countries. He also welcomed the proposal for the convening of an international conference on development financing.

59. The disappointing economic performance of many of the developing countries during the 1980s, caused, inter alia, by inadequate resources for development, declining commodity prices, the debt burden and frequent natural disasters, had led to an increase in the number of least developed countries. Under the new criteria proposed by the Committee for Development Planning, several more countries, including his own, would qualify for least developed country status. In spite of the implementation of economic policies aimed at bring about self-sustained economic growth and development, the Solomon Islands continued to be dependent on outside financial and technical assistance. The country's limited industrial capability and serious infrastructure problems left it vulnerable to international commodity price fluctuations, while the economy had suffered repeated damage from natural disasters such as hurricanes and earthquakes.

60. The Solomon Islands had sought least developed country status in the past but had not fulfilled the three basic requirements set by the Committee for Development Planning. The new criteria offered a more realistic approach to the identification of countries requiring special economic assistance and attention. However, he strongly supported the view that countries should cease to be considered least developed only when they had reached a level of economic development which was self-sustaining in the long term. Furthermore the graduation rule should take the transitional period into account in order to avoid disruption of the development programmes of the countries concerned.

61. Mr. NETO (Angola) said that after five years of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 (UNPAAERD), economic growth indicators showed that the situation in Africa had deteriorated rather than improved and that the region's external debt burden had increased. If, as the report of the Economic and Social Council suggested, the increase in the number of developing countries, most of them African, meeting the criteria for inclusion in the list of least developed countries was not unconnected with the reaction of the donor community to UNPAAERD, there would seem to be little value in proposing a second version of the Programme without resolving the basic flaws in the first. There was a danger that meetings and programmes would succeed one another without ever achieving their intended effect. He did, however, welcome the decision by the Government of Japan to organize an international conference on development in Africa, with the participation of African Heads of State.

62. Angola understood that far-reaching reforms were necessary in the economic and political fields in order to meet the challenges of a changing world. However, the future of the democratic experiment was threatened by the

(Mr. Neto, Angola)

absence of economic growth. Extreme poverty posed a threat to the prospects of any democratically elected Government. Angola was extremely concerned at all the obstacles to the economic growth of the developing countries identified by the Council's report: external indebtedness, increasingly negative flows of financial resources, deteriorating terms of trade, declining commodity prices and growing protectionist pressures, and thus supported all the measures that had been proposed with a view to remedying that situation.

63. The combined effects of the slowdown in the world economy and recession in the developed countries had created an unfavourable and problematic international economic environment and Angola supported the recommendations of the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund aimed at halting that situation through an increase in savings. Angola also supported the suggestion that an international conference on development financing should be convened.

64. Although Angola was not officially considered to be a least developed country, its economic and social situation was no different from that of the countries which were included in the list.

65. Mr. BATAYNEH (Jordan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the comparison which Israel had tried to draw between the current living conditions of the Palestinian people in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and the conditions obtaining prior to the Israeli occupation was an absolute abuse of intellect, honesty and integrity. The current situation could not be compared with the situation of constitutional unity and brotherhood that had existed prior to 1967; if any comparison was to be made, it would have to be with the potential level of economic and social development that the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip might have attained had there been no military occupation. The Palestinian people would then have been free, would have enjoyed the use of its own lands.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
17th meeting
held on
Thursday, 17 October 1991
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 17th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. BURKE (Ireland)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 89: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMITMENTS AND POLICIES AGREED UPON IN THE DECLARATION ON INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION, IN PARTICULAR THE REVITALIZATION OF THE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (continued)

Draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.13

1. Mr. KUFUOR (Ghana), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, introduced draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.13, and said that the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation adopted by the General Assembly at its eighteenth special session marked a very important stage, for it provided the international community with an opportunity to contribute to the growth and development of the developing countries. The draft resolution submitted under agenda item 89 called upon Member States to take measures to ensure the full and effective implementation of the commitments and policies agreed upon in the Declaration. Paragraph 3 would have the General Assembly decide to keep the implementation of the Declaration under political review at its forty-seventh session, and an ad hoc committee of the whole would be established for that purpose. In addition, the Secretary-General was requested to provide an analytical report of the steps taken by the Governments of various categories of countries, as well as by organs and organizations of the United Nations system, towards implementation of their commitments under the Declaration. He hoped that the draft resolution would receive the support of all members of the Committee.

Draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.15

2. Mr. SERSALE di CERISANO (Argentina) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.15 on regional economic cooperation among developing countries on behalf of his own country, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay. The main theme of the draft resolution, which related to the implementation of paragraph 34 of the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, was in keeping with the MERCOSUR Treaty establishing a common market between Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay - the text of which had been transmitted to the Secretary-General as document A/46/155 - and with his country's report on measures adopted in relation to growth and cooperation at the national, regional and international levels (A/46/159). The draft resolution called for specific measures to facilitate regional economic integration among developing countries, as a first step towards interregional cooperation, in the context of the eighth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, which was to consider certain key issues with a view to helping to strengthen multilateral cooperation. Regional integration should be viewed as a means rather than an end in itself, and the countries sponsoring the draft resolution were preparing themselves for integration in the world economy. The United Nations should systematically support such activities to promote regional economic integration and should,

(Mr. Sersale di Cerisano, Argentina)

inter alia, facilitate investment flows between countries by creating appropriate machinery through the various regional commissions. He urged the members of the Committee to support the draft resolution.

AGENDA ITEM 87: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION TO STUDY, MITIGATE AND MINIMIZE THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE DISASTER AT CHERNOBYL (A/46/82-E/1991/14, A/46/91-E/1991/17, A/46/163, A/46/215/Rev.1-E/1991/76/Rev.1, A/46/273, A/46/283-E/1991/114, A/46/345, A/46/477, A/46/501 and A/46/520)

3. Miss ANSTEE (Director-General, United Nations Office at Vienna, United Nations Coordinator for international cooperation for Chernobyl) said that much had been done since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 45/190 several months earlier. As indicated in his report (A/46/215/Rev.1), the Secretary-General had appointed her as Coordinator, and she worked with a tiny secretariat; an Inter-Agency Task Force had been established and a Joint Plan had been drawn up in collaboration with the authorities of Belarus, Russia, Ukraine and the USSR, and its final version, prepared in consultations with the Task Force, had been circulated to all Member States in July 1991; finally, a Chernobyl Pledging Conference had been held on 20 September 1991.

4. Quite naturally, the preparation of the Joint Plan had been the focus of attention, and had required very close cooperation, not only between the four Governments concerned, but also between them and the various United Nations bodies and organs which were involved. The task had not been an easy one, owing to the complexities inherent in the Chernobyl tragedy itself, and had been compounded by the political upheavals of recent months.

5. The objective of the Pledging Conference had been to secure financing for the 131 projects contained in the Joint Plan; those projects, in keeping with the interest expressed by certain delegations, focused on such fields as nuclear safety, the cleaning up of contaminated areas, the environmental consequences of nuclear fall-out, the effects of radiation on children and, in particular, the economic and social impact of the disaster. The Conference should by no means be considered an end in itself. Its purpose had been to give Member States the opportunity to respond to the appeal they themselves had made in General Assembly resolution 45/190 so as to ensure the optimum use of all contributions for priority programmes and projects. A United Nations Chernobyl Trust Fund had been established to that end, but she could overemphasize that there was a need for other types of aid (whether bilateral or from intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, the business community, scientific bodies, and even individuals). Contributions in kind also could be made, for example, in the form of equipment. However, she expressed the hope that all the contributions would be used for the implementation of projects included in the Joint Plan and that she would be informed of each contribution so that she could monitor all aspects of the financing and implementation of the Plan and keep the General Assembly informed.

(Miss Anstee)

6. Several delegations at the Pledging Conference had cited the assessment of the radiological consequences of the accident prepared by an international advisory committee. Some had recommended that the international community should be guided by its conclusions. It was clear that the report supported the need for socio-economic assistance for the victims of the accident and that it could not serve as a pretext for refusing any kind of assistance. It should be noted that the study referred only to health and radiological aspects in areas still inhabited at the end of 1990, and did not take into account the disaster's impact on people who had been evacuated or on those involved in the clean-up operations. Lastly, the study showed that the people investigated suffered from serious psychological problems.

7. The authors of the assessment certainly would agree on the need for the organization of a public information campaign to raise awareness among the population of the effects of radiation on health, epidemiological studies of the long-term effects of low-level radiation doses, the application of technologies for the decontamination of agricultural land and the training of medical personnel in the use of equipment and techniques for diagnosis and treatment. Projects in those fields had been included in the Joint Plan.

8. It was clear that the dramatic events of August 1991 had been in the minds of delegations to the Pledging Conference; that partly explained why the announced pledges had been below the expected levels. However, it must not be forgotten that, in the view of many representatives of the four Governments concerned, the accident at Chernobyl had been a catalyst for the process of restructuring (perestroika) and openness (glasnost) and had increased the pull of centrifugal forces. It therefore followed that support for a coordinated programme to address the long-lasting economic and social consequences of the accident would help to develop closer cooperation. Member States therefore should heed the Secretary-General's appeal to continue to examine ways to finance the Joint Plan.

9. Lastly, the General Assembly must decide on future action and indicate what was required from the Secretariat. The resources allocated to her own secretariat had now run out, and she would be unable to continue her work without the assistance of at least two Professional and two General Service staff members.

10. In conclusion, she underscored the universal dimension of Chernobyl and recalled that, in a world with so much dangerous technology, an industrial accident could strike any country at any time.

11. Mr. MAJOOR (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the States members of the European Community, said that the full impact of the Chernobyl accident on the health of the affected populations would not be fully known for years to come. In December 1990, the General Assembly had adopted resolution 45/190, in which it made an urgent appeal to all States Members of the international community to continue to provide all appropriate support and assistance to the

(Mr. Majoor, Netherlands)

areas most affected by the accident. The European Community had made substantial contributions to the efforts to mitigate the consequences of the accident by providing food, medicine, technical equipment to measure radiation, facilities for decontamination and technical advice. The European Community would continue its activities as long as necessary. In Europe, many non-governmental organizations had participated in the relief efforts.

12. The European Community welcomed the positive response to resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) regarding cooperation and coordination of efforts to mitigate the consequences of the accident. An elaborate study on Chernobyl had just been published, and the data, conclusions and recommendations contained in it could provide guidelines for future cooperation in that area.

13. As a result of the international community's concerted approach, the Joint Plan had been drawn up and submitted by the Governments of the Soviet Union, Belarus, Ukraine and Russia in consultation with the United Nations Coordinator of International Cooperation for Chernobyl. The Plan provided a very useful indication of the assistance requirements, and it would be highly appreciated if the available data could be distributed to as many organizations as possible, including non-governmental organizations. While the Plan was not yet complete, it represented an initial phase in a constantly evolving process.

14. International cooperation in the field of nuclear safety must be strengthened. In 1990, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the European Community had adopted an important decision concerning technical assistance in the field of safety of nuclear installations. Discussions were currently taking place within the Community with a view to preparing a European energy charter.

15. At the Chernobyl Pledging Conference on 20 September 1991, the European Community had reaffirmed that it would continue to assist in the overall economic recovery of all regions affected by the Chernobyl disaster in order to contribute to the mitigation of the consequences of the accident.

16. Ms. FREUDENSCHUSS-REICHL (Austria) said that there was an urgent need for international solidarity to address the consequences of the Chernobyl accident, whose long-term effects had not yet been fully evaluated. Austria therefore welcomed the Secretary-General's initiative that had led to the holding of the Chernobyl Pledging Conference on 20 September 1991.

17. At the Pledging Conference, the Austrian Government had indicated that it would contribute 50 million Austrian schillings to the construction of a hospital in Minsk for children suffering from cancer. Austria had also earmarked subsidies to several private charitable organizations for humanitarian assistance to the populations of Belarus that had been most severely affected by the accident.

(Ms. Freudenschuss-Reichl, Austria)

18. Austria had taken note with interest of the comprehensive Joint Plan for international cooperation to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl accident, and it would consider making additional contributions to international efforts to aid the victims of Chernobyl.

19. Mr. KUDRYAVTSEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that there was no longer any doubt that the Chernobyl accident had been a disaster without precedent in human history, and the radiological, biological and ecological consequences of the accident would not be alleviated for many years to come. Millions of inhabitants of the Belarus, Russia and the Ukraine were still exposed in varying degrees to the harmful effects of the accident.

20. The disaster had brutally demonstrated the interdependence and the fragility of the modern world, since a nuclear accident could not be limited in space. An awareness of the collective nature of the disaster, as well as noble humanitarian principles, had prompted the international community to support the efforts being carried out in the affected Republics to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl accident.

21. The Soviet Union was sincerely grateful to the Secretary-General and the United Nations Coordinator for their tireless efforts and to the United Nations agencies that were helping to find solutions to the problems caused by the disaster. It also appreciated the assistance provided by States Members of the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and private persons. His delegation underscored the importance of the projects carried out on a bilateral basis, in particular with Japan, the Netherlands and France.

22. Economic and Social Council resolutions 1990/50 and 1991/51 had contributed to the strengthening of international cooperation in that area by setting out broad guidelines for such cooperation. Moreover, General Assembly resolution 45/190 recommended specific measures that should be taken to mitigate the consequences of the accident.

23. While they greatly appreciated the support that they received from the United Nations system and the international community, the Soviet Union and the Republics affected by the accident were aware that they bore the principal responsibility for mitigating the effects of the Chernobyl disaster. Since May 1986, more than 25 billion roubles had been allocated for that purpose. A common programme dealing with a wide range of issues, such as medical and food assistance and the decontamination of the environment, had also been drawn up. Nevertheless, it had not yet been possible to improve substantially the situation in the affected regions since the scope of the consequences of the disaster were just beginning to be known, and it was clear that they could not be mitigated without mobilizing the broad support of the international community.

24. The Chernobyl Pledging Conference, held at United Nations Headquarters on 20 September 1991, had marked an important stage in the strengthening of

(Mr. Kudryavtsev, USSR)

international cooperation, and had facilitated the pooling of resources to help finance the programmes being carried out by many United Nations agencies. The Pledging Conference had also demonstrated that the international community was committed to supporting the United Nations in its efforts to mitigate the effects of the disaster. Those commitments had been accompanied by concrete proposals that the United Nations should take duly into account during the implementation of the Joint Plan for Chernobyl.

25. The Secretary-General's report on the question (A/46/215/Rev.1) contained detailed information as well as concrete proposals regarding measures to be taken. In that respect, particular attention should be given to the mobilization of resources from business circles and non-governmental organizations and, in particular, to the smooth functioning of the United Nations Trust Fund for Chernobyl, the coordination of activities among United Nations agencies and between them and the authorities of the three affected Republics and of the Soviet Union, and the monitoring of the implementation of the Joint Plan. Those new activities would require additional resources.

26. The consideration of the item dealing with the Chernobyl disaster at the previous session of the General Assembly had taken place in an atmosphere of constructive cooperation and had resulted in the adoption of General Assembly resolution 45/190. It was to be hoped that that spirit of solidarity and mutual assistance would prevail at the current session and would lead to the adoption of a new draft resolution containing additional measures to strengthen international cooperation; that draft resolution would be submitted by the delegations of Belarus, Ukraine, and the Soviet Union.

27. Mr. KRAVCHANKA (Belarus) said that on 19 September 1991, Belarus had presented a tapestry entitled "Chernobyl" to the United Nations. That work of art, which had been completed in only nine months, gave original expression to all the tragic aspects of the Chernobyl disaster as well as to the anxieties and hopes of the Belarusian people affected by that event. The tapestry served also to demonstrate the gratitude of Belarus to the international community for the extensive support which it had provided.

28. The Secretary-General's report (A/46/215/Rev.1) bore eloquent testimony to the considerable efforts made by the organizations of the United Nations system to coordinate further international cooperation to study and mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster. The political will of States, expressed in General Assembly resolution 45/190, had led to tangible results in a very short time.

29. The Joint Plan for international long-term cooperation, drawn up by the Governments of the most seriously affected areas with the help of the United Nations Coordinator, had already received pledges at the Pledging Conference held on 20 September 1991. The Belarusian Government wished to convey its gratitude to all those who had responded generously to its appeal.

(Mr. Kravchanka, Belarus)

30. The expressions of solidarity and deliveries of food and medicine had helped reduce tension in the contaminated areas, but recent maps of areas with long-term radioactive contamination showed that a quarter of the Belarusian territory was affected, arousing new anxieties in the population. Those facts had been confirmed by international experts. Unfortunately, several years after the disaster, it was still impossible to make a precise assessment of contamination levels.

31. The results of the international assessment of the radiological consequences of the accident, organized by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), would be of critical importance for international cooperation on Chernobyl. Unfortunately, the report would not appear until April 1992, but the information already available indicated that the study was not exhaustive and failed to give a full picture of the consequences of the disaster. The Joint Plan was therefore of extreme importance. Whatever scientific conclusions were reached concerning the health of the exposed populations, it was evident that those people required both social protection from their State and international assistance. Nevertheless, the critical issues which had been considered by the international experts and other scientific groups provided a sound point of departure for more extensive studies and for the preparation of more specific measures to protect against and prevent radiological risks.

32. Belarus hoped that international cooperation in alleviating the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster would be organized along three basic lines.

33. First, international support should be provided for the efforts of the three affected Republics and by the future Union of Sovereign States to create a special national infrastructure charged with the long-term solution of problems affecting the entire "Chernobyl space". In that respect, the Joint Plan provided the necessary guidelines for rationalizing and coordinating support aimed at tackling the full range of intricate medical, social, economic, environmental and humanitarian problems faced by the most severely affected areas. The international cooperation priorities identified in the Plan formed an integral part of the multilateral cooperation which had been approved by the Member States in decisions of the intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations system.

34. Secondly, the profound political and economic crisis in the former Soviet Union was seriously hampering the implementation of the programme, set up by the Union and the Republics, of urgent measures to overcome the consequences of the disaster. The exercise of human rights by the population of the "Chernobyl space", while guaranteed at the legislative level, was extremely problematic at the economic level. It was therefore necessary to grant emergency medical assistance and food aid to the population of the affected areas, and above all to children and the most vulnerable groups, with priority given to the provision of medical equipment and medicine.

(Mr. Kravchanka, Belarus)

35. Thirdly, long-term cooperation would be organized on the basis of mutual interest. International aid was not entirely altruistic. The international community, and the "nuclear community" in particular, would gain invaluable experience from dealing with the consequences of a nuclear disaster. The price paid for the acquisition of that experience by the peoples of Belarus, Ukraine and Russia was incomparably higher than the sum of the expenses already incurred and anticipated in the form of humanitarian and technical assistance from donors and international organizations. Furthermore, a number of States were displaying great interest in the practical side-benefits they hoped to receive from the Chernobyl projects and programmes and were expressing their readiness to participate in those activities.

36. Belarus intended to proceed in accordance with certain principles. First, it would guarantee access to all information on the consequences of the disaster on condition that it should participate in measures to address the problems identified. All assessments, conclusions and recommendations by experts would be taken into account without prejudice. A wide range of structures and mechanisms for the coordination of all aspects of international cooperation on the Chernobyl question would be acceptable, and coordination between bilateral efforts and multilateral programmes and projects would continue to be encouraged. The aid and cooperation provided would be depoliticized, and, finally, such aid and support would gradually evolve from philanthropy to genuine partnership.

37. In conclusion, he stressed the necessity of maintaining and strengthening the coordination machinery for international Chernobyl-related cooperation that had been set up within the United Nations system, since such accidents could recur, and the latest incident at Chernobyl, on 11 October 1991, was an ominous reminder of that danger.

38. Mr. OUDOVENKO (Ukraine) said that the latest incident at Chernobyl demonstrated the importance of the matter under consideration. While that incident had had no disastrous consequences, it nevertheless demonstrated that the Chernobyl problem was an ongoing one that required constant attention from the international community. Serious consideration must therefore be given to the safety of nuclear power stations, and it would perhaps be advisable to develop international nuclear and radiation safety standards and to set up cooperation programmes with the eventual aim of creating an international centre whose services would be available to all countries.

39. The Chernobyl problem had struck Ukraine at a crucial moment in its history. Ukraine, which had become independent on 24 August 1991, was currently formulating its political, economic, social and cultural development strategy. All its efforts in those areas would be hampered by the Chernobyl problem, and the billions of roubles which would have to be spent annually to mitigate the effects of the disaster would be lost for education, public health and other social concerns. Furthermore, the Chernobyl problem would not be settled for a long time to come, and the costs that it would entail

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were unlikely to diminish. The international community and the United Nations should take due account of that situation, in particular when determining Ukraine's contribution to the regular budget of the United Nations and to the budgets of other international organizations.

40. The current session of the General Assembly should usher in a new phase in international cooperation on Chernobyl. His delegation welcomed efforts by the United Nations and its organizations to promote the coordination of international assistance aimed at addressing the consequences of the accident. He wished to express his delegation's gratitude in that context to the Secretary-General for his initiatives and to the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna for her work as Coordinator. Those efforts had resulted in the establishment of the Joint Plan and the convening of the Chernobyl Pledging Conference. That Conference had demonstrated to Ukraine the growing solidarity of the States Members of the United Nations with the populations affected by the Chernobyl disaster.

41. His delegation also welcomed the vigorous action taken by various United Nations specialized agencies, including UNESCO, ILO and WHO. WHO, in particular, had adopted a programme to establish three centres which specialized in the radiation problems of Ukraine, Belarus and Russia.

42. IAEA had launched an international project to assess the radiological consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear accident and the protective measures taken in the past. His delegation could not agree with all the experts' findings, in particular, those relating to the accident's impact on the health of the affected populations. As the assessment was limited in nature, its findings could not be extrapolated and made to apply to all aspects of the Chernobyl problem. In his delegation's view, the study should be considered as the first step in a long series of in-depth studies devoted to the question.

43. The Ukrainian people greatly appreciated the assistance provided by various countries, including Italy, France, Poland and Czechoslovakia, in the form of medical equipment, food and various supplies. They were also grateful to many NGOs from various countries which had demonstrated their willingness to receive Ukrainian children.

44. The most pressing task was to protect the health of the people in the monitored areas, resettle the population in uncontaminated areas, conduct large-scale radiological and medical research and set up a computerized radiological monitoring system in contaminated areas. Groundwater must also be protected from any radioactive contamination. In the vicinity of Chernobyl considerable quantities of radioactive equipment and materials were buried underground. The waters of the Dnieper, the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea could become contaminated. One of the most critical issues was that of the "sarcophagus": 180 tons of nuclear fuel were still trapped in an enormous concrete encasement. The help of experts from around the world would be necessary in order to resolve the problem. The Ukrainian Government had

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decided to hold an international contest for projects designed to convert unit 4 of the Chernobyl power plant into an environmentally safe site. It invited all countries, organizations and individuals to participate in the contest.

45. In conclusion, he wished to inform the Committee that delegations from his country, the Ukraine, the Soviet Union and Belarus were currently holding informal consultations on a draft resolution to strengthen international cooperation and the coordination of efforts to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster. The draft resolution would be submitted at the current session of the General Assembly. It was hoped that Member States would consider it in a constructive spirit.

46. Mr. TANLAY (Turkey) said that, more than five years after the Chernobyl disaster, the extent of its consequences, particularly as concerned the environment, could still not be gauged. The risks of radiation had not been eliminated, even in the remotest regions of the condemned area. As the Secretary-General had emphasized in his report, the impact would continue to be felt for many more years, not only in the disaster area, but also by the world at large.

47. His delegation wished to express its concern over the seriousness of the human, health and environmental consequences of the accident and believed that strengthening international cooperation was essential to combating its aftermath. The adoption of resolution 45/190 by the General Assembly had greatly contributed to building such cooperation, whose objective should be not only to mitigate the consequences of the disaster, but also to find ways and means of preventing other accidents of that nature in future.

48. Mr. BAHADIAN (Brazil) welcomed the efforts by the United Nations to implement General Assembly resolution 45/190 on mitigating the consequences of the accident. Chernobyl symbolized the need for the international community to cope with the frightening consequences of disasters caused by man's reliance on technology, but it should also become the symbol of international solidarity with those who suffered from its effects.

49. Brazil had been a sponsor of the resolutions submitted to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly on the efforts of the international community to mitigate the consequences of the accident at the nuclear power plant. It supported the activities undertaken by the United Nations in search of solutions to the dramatic problems caused by the disaster and, in that regard, believed that the joint plan of international cooperation was a useful instrument for coordinating multilateral assistance and bilateral efforts to mitigate the consequences of the accident.

50. Mr. LEE (World Health Organization) said that WHO had been concerned with the health consequences of the Chernobyl accident from the beginning. In May 1991, the World Health Assembly had endorsed the establishment, under the

(Mr. Lee, WHO)

auspices of WHO, of an International Programme to Mitigate the Health Effects of the Chernobyl Accident, specifying that it would be financed from voluntary contributions.

51. The programme had two main objectives. The first was to mitigate the health effects of the accident on the populations in the affected areas by focusing efforts on clinical examinations and the treatment of persons exposed to radiation. Indirect medical symptoms, including psychological disturbances, nutritional problems and other aspects of rehabilitation would also be addressed. The second objective was to gather scientific data and practical information on the effects of the radiation absorbed by persons exposed to it. The experience gained in the treatment of overexposure and from the assessment of various response measures should result in improved medical preparedness for radiological emergencies in the future. All Member States would have access to such information.

52. A number of pilot projects had been launched with resources provided by the Soviet Union and Japan earlier in the year. They dealt, inter alia, with the detection and treatment of leukaemia and thyroid disorders, and the assessment of the effects on the brains of children whose mothers had been exposed during pregnancy. Epidemiological research was also under way to study the long-term effects of radiation. Certain effects, such as susceptibility to cancer and genetic abnormalities, might become manifest only after they had been latent for several years. Two main strategies must be emphasized in connection with the Chernobyl accident: coordination and the mobilization of resources. The disaster had had consequences on many fronts. While health concerns were obviously of primary importance, there were other aspects to be dealt with, and close cooperation must be maintained among the various sectors involved. WHO was actively participating in the work of the Inter-Agency Committee on Response to Nuclear Accidents and the United Nations Task Force dealing with the matter. Collaboration with bilateral donors and other international organizations was essential in order to avoid duplication of efforts and ensure the effective use of available resources and expertise. To that end, the coordination of all health-related projects through the WHO International Programme would be the optimal solution.

53. Implementation of the Programme required wide-ranging support in terms of both financial resources and technical expertise. It must be continued for at least several decades in view of the long-term nature of the health problems. Its success would depend not only on the financial support of Member States, but also on their willingness to contribute their scientific and technical expertise. The financial requirements to that end could already be estimated at $150 to $250 million for the 15 to 20 years ahead. The international community must coordinate its activities with national and local authorities in order to mitigate the consequences of the accident on the exposed populations and take advantage of the large body of scientific data available to it.

54. Mr. GANTCHEV (Bulgaria) said that his country shared the concern of the international community to overcome the effects of the Chernobyl disaster on the environment and people's health. Millions of people had been affected, particularly in Ukraine and Belarus, and thousands continued to suffer from the effects of increased radiation. Bulgaria, a country which had also been contaminated, was determined to participate actively in the efforts of the international community to mitigate and minimize the disastrous consequences of the accident. The question of nuclear safety was of particular importance for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Bulgaria had six power stations in operation, and their safety was an issue of considerable concern. The Bulgarian Government was aware of the problem and intended to set up a centre for radiation protection for the Balkan region. The aim of the project was to train experts and carry out research work on radiation protection and safety. Some steps had already been taken in that respect.

55. The United Nations programme on the Chernobyl disaster, in which Bulgaria certainly wished to participate, should contribute not only to mitigation of the consequences of the accident but also to the acquisition of experience in the elaboration of safety measures to protect against such disasters.

56. Mr. KOIKE (Japan) said that his country continued to be very concerned about the long-term effects of the Chernobyl accident on human health and the environment in the affected region. Japan had always promoted the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, for it was the only country in the world to have suffered the effects of the atomic bomb, and it felt deep sympathy for all the people affected by the accident; that was why it had been a sponsor of every one of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on that important issue.

57. As the Secretary-General had stated in his report, the Chernobyl accident had an international dimension, not only because its insidious effects had transcended national boundaries but also because its aftermath held important lessons for all countries in the world. The magnitude and gravity of the accident required the international community to respond in a spirit of cooperation and solidarity. The Joint Plan described the assistance needs in the economic and social areas; it should therefore serve as the basis for international cooperation in those sectors. As far as the radiological and scientific aspects of the accident were concerned, the report prepared by the International Advisory Committee of IAEA constituted the most authoritative and scientifically sound study currently available.

58. For its part, Japan had been doing its utmost to help the world community to take up the challenge; at the beginning of 1991 it had contributed approximately $20 million to WHO for its activities in the region. It had also extended bilateral aid to the Soviet Union, and Japanese experts had participated in the research activities undertaken by such agencies as IAEA. It remained committed to the efforts of the international community to mitigate the effects of the Chernobyl disaster, both through bilateral channels and through the appropriate United Nations organizations.

59. Mr. ISAKSSON (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) said that UNESCO had responded immediately to the appeal of the Ukrainian, Belarusian and Soviet Governments for assistance to deal with the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster. It had prepared an action programme which included more than 60 projects dealing with education, science, social sciences, culture and communication.

60. In the field of science one main project was the establishment of an ecological sciences network within the framework of the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme, which was designed to bring researchers together in order to pool information about the ecological consequences of the disaster. An international conference had also been scheduled for 1992, in collaboration with IAEA and the Economic Commission for Europe, on the impact of nuclear plants on water supplies. A research project on the role of the hydrological cycle in the transfer of radionucleids was also being launched.

61. In the field of education a foreign language teaching laboratory was being established at Minsk, with Belgian and French support, which would enable the professionals involved in the clean-up operations to have access to international scientific and technical information. An international centre for psychological rehabilitation was being established in Kiev for the basic purpose of training psychologists, especially for the benefit of children in rural areas. In that connection UNESCO was setting up three psycho-social rehabilitation centres for children victims of Chernobyl in Ukraine, Belarus and Russia; the project had already received financial support from Germany and Canada.

62. In the field of culture the main focus of the UNESCO Chernobyl Programme was to evaluate the impact of the catastrophe on the cultural heritage of the republics concerned and to propose appropriate action for restoration and preservation.

63. UNESCO had sent a field mission to evaluate the situation with respect to archives and propose measures for the conservation of stocks and the decontamination of important documents, as well as measures for the health of the personnel concerned.

64. To date, UNESCO had managed to raise approximately $2 million in funds from various sources for projects in its Chernobyl Programme. That was a modest sum in view of the needs, but the organization would continue its efforts to mobilize resources. UNESCO participation in the international reconstruction effort was being closely coordinated with the efforts of all the other United Nations agencies involved, under the aegis of the Inter-Agency Task Force set up by the Administrative Committee on Coordination.

65. Mr. JASINSKI (Poland) said that the effects of the Chernobyl accident were still being felt and that it was as yet impossible to assess the accident's consequences. As one of the countries suffering the effects of the tragedy at Chernobyl, Poland hoped to see multilateral cooperation in that

(Mr. Jasinski, Poland)

area strengthened. Assessing the impact of that international catastrophe required intellectual, material and financial resources that could only be mobilized in a multilateral setting. Moreover, such cooperation would improve the coordination of activities, not only among international organizations, but also in the scientific community, thereby leading to broader exchanges of experience.

66. As his delegation had indicated at the Pledging Conference, Polish specialized institutions and experts had been actively involved in the implementation of national and international programmes to deal with the aftermath of the accident. Polish engineers had designed equipment for measuring the radiological contamination of the air, which had aroused interest in Western European countries. Poland was also willing to participate in the development and implementation of the programme of action sponsored by the United Nations, and it had already identified a number of projects in the joint plan that might be entrusted to Polish experts. His delegation supported the participation of the United Nations Development Programme, as defined in Governing Council decision 91/23, and believed that consideration might be given to implementing joint plan projects as part of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction.

67. Ms. O'DELL (International Atomic Energy Agency) said that IAEA had reacted immediately and forcefully to the catastrophe. Within months of the accident, the Agency had: organized a scientific review of the situation; adopted two conventions, the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency; formed the Inter-Agency Committee on Response to Nuclear Accidents; and established the Chernobyl Centre for International Research. Lastly, it had provided assistance on request.

68. Early in 1990, IAEA had organized an international project to evaluate the radiological consequences of the accident, the results of which had been published in May 1991. While the conclusions of the study - which highlighted the social and economic difficulties of the people living in the areas affected by the catastrophe - had been well received by Member States and the scientific community, they had been criticized by certain media organizations and by the authorities and scientific bodies of the affected Republics.

69. The assessment had been carried out not by IAEA alone but by some 200 independent experts from 25 countries, some of whom had been nominated by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and WHO; the work had been overseen by an International Advisory Committee. IAEA had provided secretariat services, coordinated the work and arranged for the scientific review of the experts' findings.

70. The assessment's limited scope had been recognized by the International Advisory Committee, which had made proposals for future work aimed at studying problems not covered by the assessment. Because the need for guidelines for

(Ms. O'Dell)

radiological protection of the populations living in the contaminated areas had been urgent, it had not been possible for the assessment to cover those who had been evacuated or the teams responsible for the decontamination of the accident zone.

71. Clearly, further research was necessary, not only on radiological and health problems, but also on the social and economic impact of the catastrophe. IAEA would continue to study those questions and to cooperate with other international organizations within its area of competence. The Agency's programme called for an assessment of the radiation doses received by emergency teams and evacuees and of the protection situation within the exclusion zone, and a study of such issues as radioactive particles. Execution of that programme was, of course, contingent on the agreement of the relevant Governments and would require extrabudgetary funding from Member States.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.